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THE 10 ISSUE

10 Ridiculous Feats of Literature p.30

10 Prostitutes Who Changed the World p.36

10 Surprising Stories from Afghanistan

10 Life-Changing Video Games p.59

10 Not-So-Bright Ideas in Science

10 Provocative Questions about Chickens ... Answered! p.26

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THE REAL STORY OF RICE-A-RONI p.18

DOES THE MARLBORO MAN SMOKE WOMEN'S CIGARETTES?

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MENTAL BREAKDOWN

Our Ninth Annual 10 Issue

30
10 WORKS OF LITERATURE THAT WERE RIDICULOUSLY HARD TO WRITE
BY MARK JUDDERY
Want to know what it's like to take a pickax to writer's block? Meet the paralyzed editor who dictated his memoir by blinking, the swami who wrote 843 poems in 24 hours, and eight others who suffered for their art.

36
10 PROSTITUTES WHO ALTERED THE FATE OF THE UNIVERSE
BY LINDA RODRIGUEZ
Scientists, artists, spies, poets—and those were just their day jobs! When these call girls and rent boys weren't hustling for cash, they were busy shaping history.

50
10 THINGS YOU DON'T KNOW ABOUT AFGHANISTAN
BY DAVID AXE
Birdwatching. Foosball. A brutal form of polo played with a dead goat? We're not saying you should send your kids to summer camp in Afghanistan; we're just saying they wouldn't run out of things to do.

42
10 OUTSIDER ARTISTS WORTH KNOWING
BY BILL DeMAIN
Artists usually march to the beat of a different drummer. But these folks built themselves whole new drums. Discover how a cast of outsiders fused raw materials with even rawer creativity to change the world of art forever.

59
10 AMAZING WAYS VIDEO GAMES CAN CHANGE YOUR LIFE
BY JR MINKEL
Self-help manuals have nothing on video games. Whether you're looking to become a better surgeon or make some extra dough, today's toughest problems are best tackled with a joystick.

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MENTAL BREAKDOWN

13
SCATTER_BRAINED

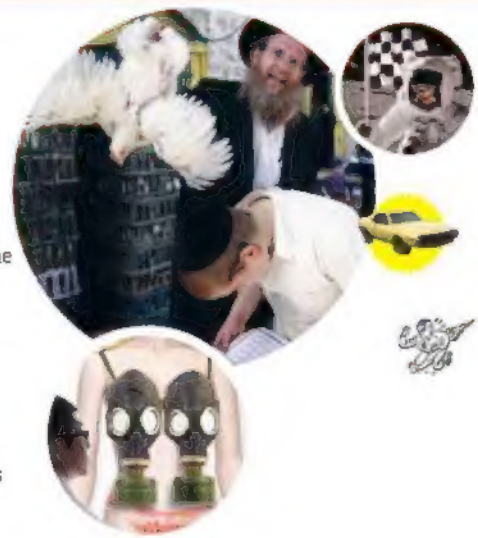
The West

In this issue's Scatterbrained, we're searching for adventure and riding off into the sunset. Along the way, we'll teach you the secrets of cattle rustling, cowboy hats, and why the Marlboro Man smokes women's cigarettes.

MORE 10 LISTS

26
10 PROVOCATIVE QUESTIONS ABOUT RAISING CHICKENS
BY MEGAN WILDE
From chicken saddles to pecking orders, our henhouse exposé uncovers what all the clucking is about.

64
10 NOT-SO-BRIGHT IDEAS IN SCIENCE
BY ALINE MENDELSOHN
Einstein. Fermi. Hawking. Not one of those geniuses won the Ig Nobel Prize. Then again, none of them spent their days studying the environmental benefits of panda poo.



67
6 DEGREES OF KEN JENNINGS
NASA & NASCAR
BY KEN JENNINGS

68
THE QUIZ
BY KARA KOVALCHIK AND SANDY WOOD

72
THE LISTS
BY STACY CONRADT

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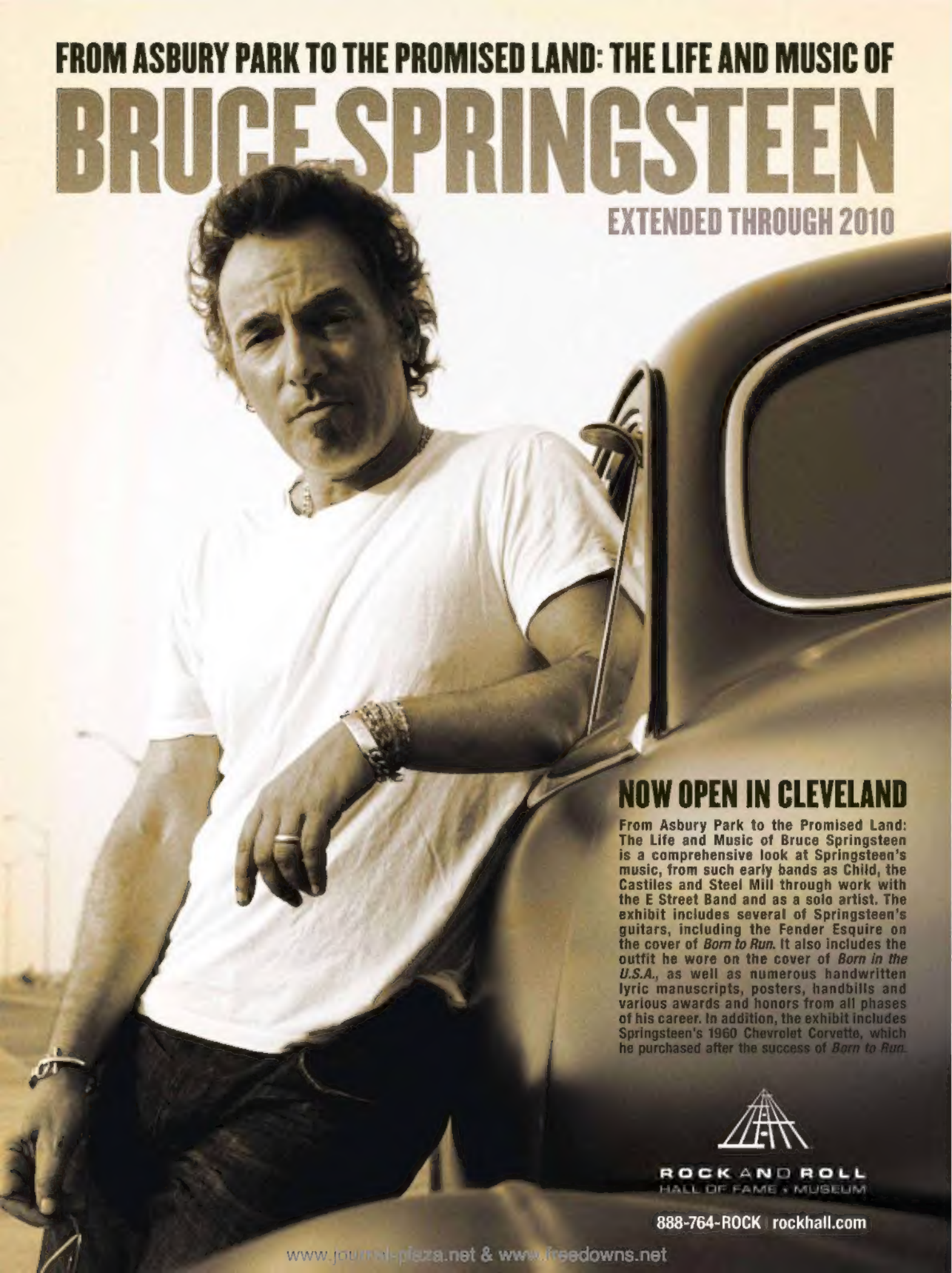
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This issue is dedicated in loving memory to Dorothy Bond Wood and William Edward Pearson, Sr.

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MENTAL FLAWS
FROM JAN/FEB 2010:

DHAKA NOIR
In a rare bit of geographical confusion, last issue's story on Nobel Prize winners stated that the Bangladeshi economist Muhammad Yunus was Indian. To add insult to injury, we also claimed that the institution he teaches at was in India. Our sincerest apologies to Professor Yunus, the University of Chittagong, and any readers who were upset by the error. Normally, we'd beg for your forgiveness. But in this case, maybe you could microloan us some instead?

TUNNEL VISIONS
In last month's piece on "The Tunnel That Saved Bosnia," we dug ourselves into a mathematical hole when we claimed that the underground passage was started in March 1992, finished in July 1993, and took just four months to construct. After double-checking with various Bosnian calendars and wearing out the subtraction key on our pocket calculators, we'd like to admit error. The tunnel was in fact built in a few months; construction ended in July of 1992, not 1993.

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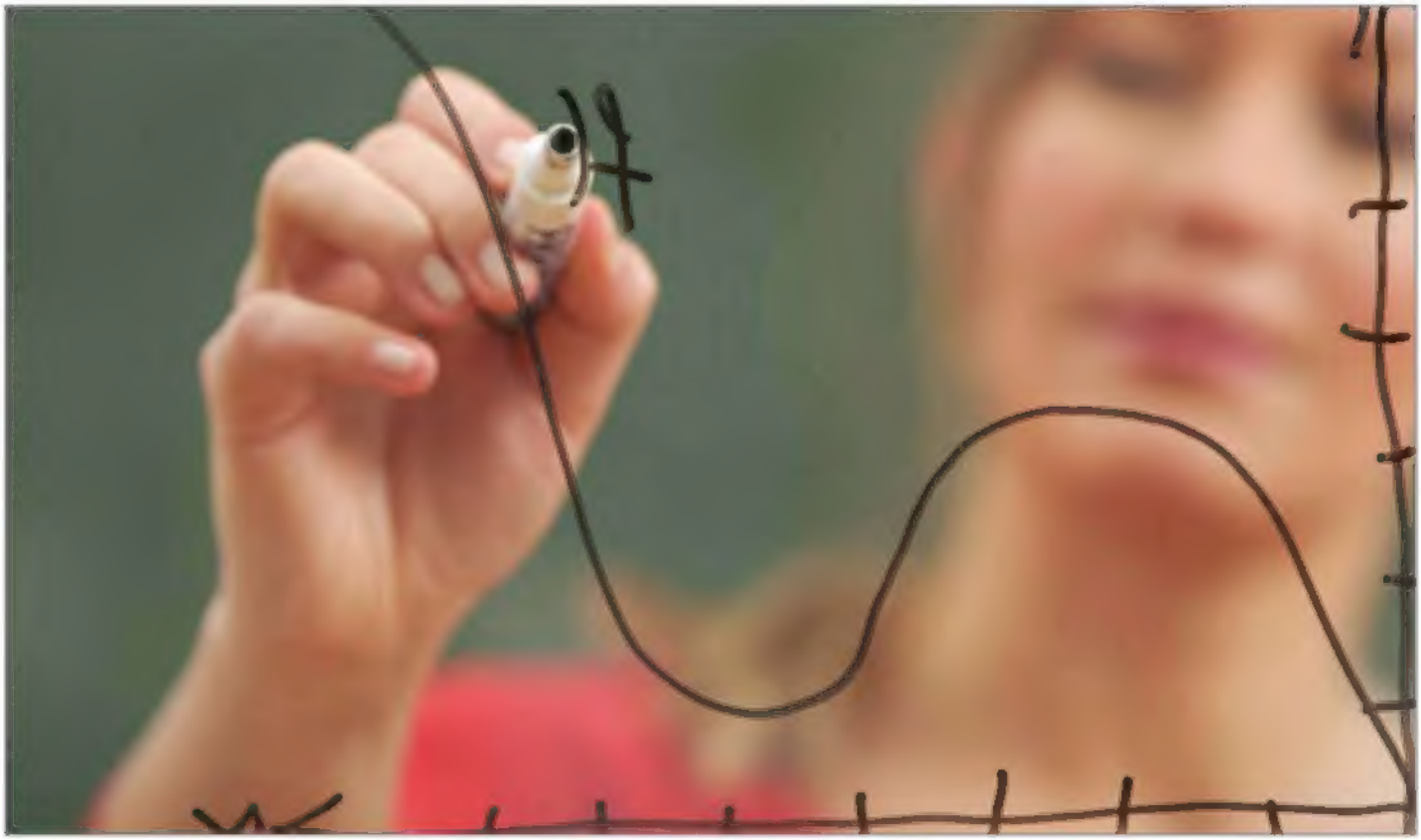

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Aline Mendelsohn

It takes a special person to write about 10 Not-So-Bright Ideas in Science (pg. 64), and Aline Mendelsohn is just that kind of special person. For five years, she was a features writer for the *Orlando Sentinel*, where she wrote about drive-in churches, playing bingo from beyond the grave, and life at a postal worker retirement community (where there are no mailboxes or dogs). So when it came time for her to report on the Ig Nobel winner who studied whether it was better to be hit on the head with an empty beer bottle or a full one, Aline felt right at home. These days, home is New York City, where Aline writes for *Time Out New York* and the *New York Post*.

JR Minkel

JR Minkel is no stranger to weird science. A freelance journalist based in Nashville, Tenn., JR spent two years as a daily news reporter for ScientificAmerican.com, and his work has appeared in *Popular Science* and *New Scientist*. But when it came to investigating how video games can save your life (pg. 59), he admitted to being a little weirded-out by all the evidence he found. JR is currently sitting at home playing his Wii in an effort to become a surgeon, make millions, or otherwise build an empire. His first book, *Instant Egghead Guide: The Universe*, was published in 2009.

Mark Juddery

You should trust Mark Juddery when he says that his latest contribution, 10 Works of Literature that Were Ridiculously Hard to Write (pg. 30), is absolutely one of the most fascinating articles you will ever read. He wouldn't exaggerate. After all, as the author of *Overrated! The 50 Most Overhyped Things in History*, due out from Penguin Books in July, Mark is an expert on things that don't live up to expectations. Always modest, he lives in sunny Australia, where he spends his free time running marathons, holding meditation classes, and writing television scripts.

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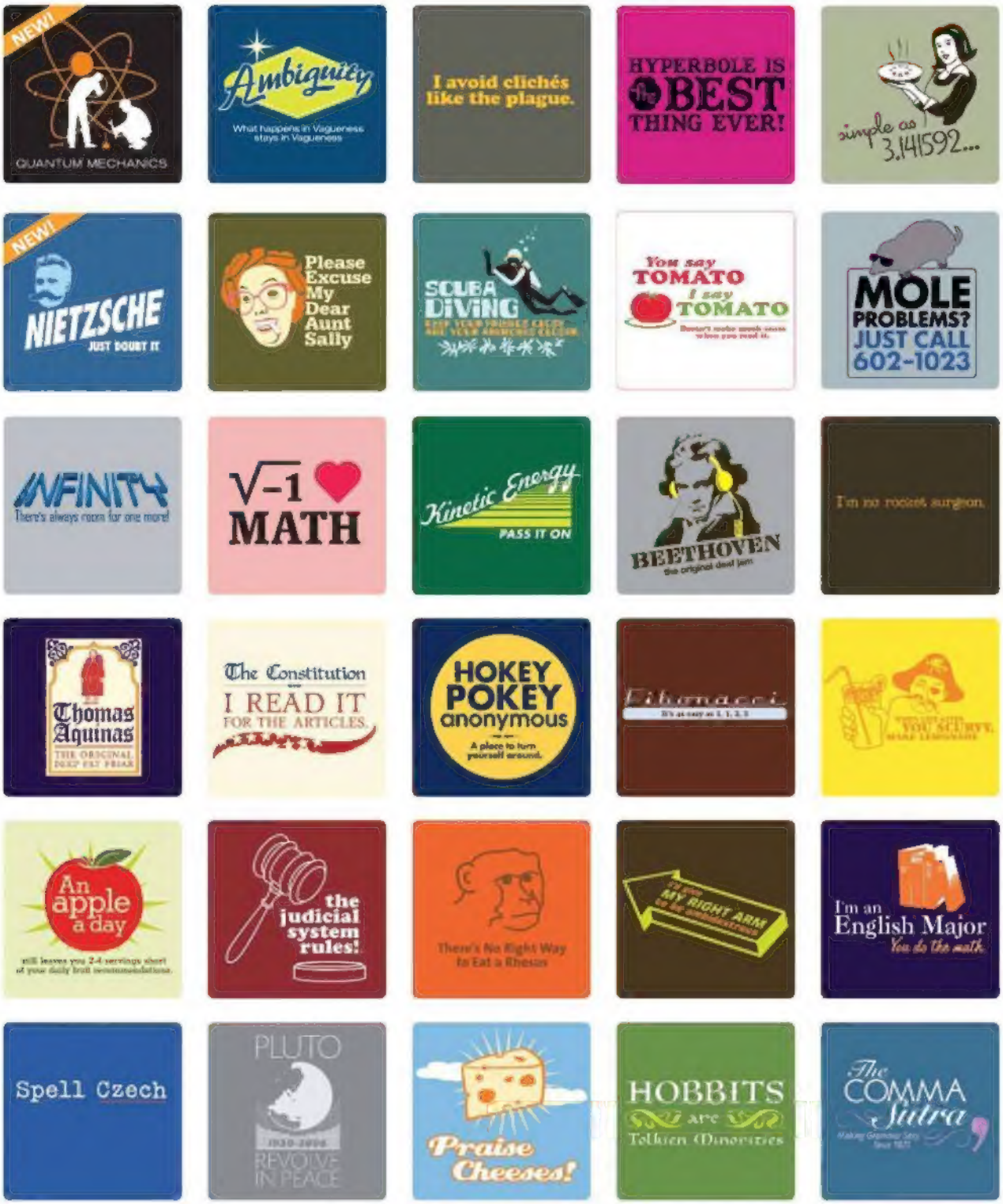

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MAIL BONDING

Race Issues, Martin Luther, and the Surprising View from the Mountain!

RACE ISSUES

While your publication is great, it is not perfect. Contrary to the fact on page 65 of the Jan-Feb 2010 edition, it is NOT the "Iditarod Dog Sled race," but the "Iditarod [Trail] Sled Dog Race." This is not mere semantics. The winner is the first dog to hit the finish line, not the first sled. One year we actually had a photo finish—first dog's nose over the line won.

GREYFOX *WASILLA, AK*

THE MEANING OF WIFE

While Lutherans around the world rejoiced to see our namesake mentioned in Ken Jennings' [6 Degrees] column, I'm sorry to say that some of his story is incorrect. Dr. Luther was not in love when he married his wife. But they did fall in love AFTER they were married. Luther once noted what an unexpected pleasure it was to awake with "pigtails on the pillow." Being Lutherans, we will forgive your error, of course. We are, after all, known for grace.

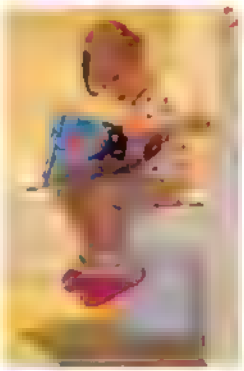
REV. SCOTT A. JOHNSON *AMES, IA*

AN ANGRY LETTER FROM A READER WHO MAY OR MAY NOT WANT A FREE T-SHIRT

"I strongly suggest either ending publication, or sacking your current writing staff and replacing them. You have 48 hours."

Ugh! It looks like we missed the deadline Can we ask for an extension?

PORTRAIT OF THE MAGAZINE IN ITS NATURAL HABITAT



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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

That's it; no more excuses!

We know the winter's been long and cold, but it's time to get up and get to work. Lucky for you, we've got just the 10 Issue inspiration you've been looking for.

Always fantasized about being a famous artist, but weren't sure you had the skills? Not to worry! Take a cue from one of our 10 Outsider Artists (pg. 42), Bill Dan, who made it big in the art world by balancing rocks! Always dreamed of giving up the city life and moving to the country? Our journey into 10 Provocative Questions about Raising Chickens (pg. 26) is the perfect primer. Or perhaps you're more interested in amassing a giant fortune. Well, on page 59, we'll show you why that might not even require prying yourself away from your Wii!

So, dust off your best interview suit and start padding your resume. Whether your dreams are made of fighting partridges (it's big in Afghanistan) or being a cowboy chef (it's surprisingly lucrative!), this 10 Issue has motivation written all over it.

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The Wild, Wild West

What's more exciting than life out on the range? The stories about it, of course!

BY DAVID GOLDENBERG

COOKS ILLUSTRATED

Old Westerns are replete with stereotypes: the stoic cowboy, the righteous sheriff, the hooker with a heart of gold. But few are as misleading as the doddering old wagon chef, "Cookie," who bumbles along the cattle drive. In reality, the cook was an authority figure—and a well-paid one at that. Chefs often earned $50 a month to the cowboys' $25. Besides ensuring that everyone got hot, hearty meals, these top chefs managed all of the camp provisions, acting as barber, doctor, and even judge, settling arguments between the boys.

BRAND MANAGEMENT

Forget the Indians! For a cowboy in the American West, the biggest threat to business wasn't the natives but the thieving lot known as cattle rustlers. As cowboys moved huge herds of steer hundreds of miles, these conniving rustlers made their fortunes by shoplifting the merchandise. They had some tricky methods for covering up their tracks, too. Because most steer were branded with unique designs to show who owned them, the thieves got around the system by making portable branders called running irons. These "hot pencils" allowed rustlers to rework the brands on the fly and then claim the cattle as their own. Given the power that running irons had to create chaos, in most places in the Old West, you could be arrested just for carrying one.

When Best Western expanded its hotel chain east of the Mississippi in 1964, it branded

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CIGARETTES WITH RANCH FLAVOR

In 1954, the Philip Morris company turned to ad man extraordinaire Leo Burnett with a problem. Its worst-selling brand, Marlboro, needed a new image. At the time, the company was marketing the cigarettes to women under the slogan "Mild as May." But Burnett helped steer the brand in a completely different direction. He created the Marlboro Man, a hyper-masculine cowboy alone on the range, save for his trusty pack of smokes. With Burnett's golden touch, Marlboro sales jumped from $150 million to $5 billion within a year. By 1972, it was the best-selling cigarette in the world.

In 1954, Philip Morris was marketing Marlboro cigarettes to women under the slogan "Mild as May."

JEAN TESTING

In the 1860s, a Bavarian immigrant named Levi Strauss hoped to invent pants that could withstand the challenges of life in the Old West. So, he stitched together a durable prototype using canvas and sent it to a prospector for testing. While the coarse material was sturdy enough for the saddle, the pants caused serious chafing. In response, Strauss replaced the cloth with a soft new fabric from France, called denim. His blue jeans were a hit, but buyers still had one complaint: With all the wear, the pants were coming apart at the seams. In an effort to keep the cowboys' pants on, Strauss teamed up with Nevada tailor Jacob Davis, and the pair created a system of copper rivets on the front pockets. The fastening added extra support in the areas that got the most stress from riding. Strauss and Davis patented their system in 1873, and by the end of 2009, more than 4 billion pairs of Levis had been sold worldwide.

How Much Water Can a 10-Gallon Hat Really Hold?

Alas, the 10-gallon hat falls 87 percent short of its promise. The average Stetson holds about 3 quarts of water when filled to the brim. But in all likelihood, this discrepancy is the result of poor communication, not poor measurement. The earliest versions of the hat came from Mexico, where cowboys decorated them with colorful braids, known as *galóns*. The taller the hat, the more galóns could be wrapped around it. So, a 10-galón hat would be very tall, indeed. When cowboys from across the Rio Grande started borrowing their Mexican coworkers' favorite accessory, they likely butchered its name

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

Mae West, Adam West, and Kanye West

Sometimes it's difficult to tell one West from another. We've created this handy chart to help you out.

MAE WEST	ADAM WEST	KANYE WEST
Got started as a bawdy film actress in the 1930s	Got started as a cheesy superhero in the 1960s	Got started as a soulful rapper/producer in the 1990s
Wrote plays that were racy	Fought crime like crazy	Dropped rhymes with Jay-Z
Got kicked off NBC Radio for telling racy jokes	Got kicked off ABC for low ratings	Got kicked off the MTV Music Awards for hijacking a microphone
Often erotic	Often eccentric	Often egocentric

ts new hotels Best Eastern. The name flopped within two years

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NORTH BY NORTHWEST

Secrets of the Hitchcock Cameos

Alfred Hitchcock made cameos in 37 of his own films—but you have to be pretty fast on the pause button to catch him. We've gone behind the scenes to help you understand the wheres and whys of Hitchcock's mysterious appearances.

BY SCOTT CANZ

IT STARTS WITH AN ACCIDENT

The tradition of the Hitchcock cameo started in 1927, when a bit player in one of Hitch's earliest films, *The Lodger*, failed to show up for work. Hitchcock stepped in and played a bystander in a crowd scene. In his next few movies, he made similar appearances, filling out various group shots and street scenes. But as his fame grew, he began to delight in being recognized on screen. His cameos became more elaborate; and, eventually, they became part of his directorial signature.

ALFRED ALMIGHTY

Often, Hitchcock used his cameos to let the audience know that he was the man in charge. In 1943's *Shadow of a Doubt*, Hitchcock plays a game of poker on a train. His hand? A full house. Similarly, in 1954's ***Rear Window*** [image 1], you can see Hitchcock winding a clock in the background, subtly reminding the audience that he's the one controlling time.

Because of poor hygiene and sanitation on the Oregon Trail, settlers had a distinctive stench about them. Apparently Native Americans found them repulsive.

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FIDDLING AROUND

Hitchcock liked to play visual games with his cameos, as a way of rewarding careful observers. For example, in three of his films, he carries string instruments that increase in size from one film to the next. In *Spellbound* (1945), he holds a violin while daintily smoking a cigarette. Two years later, in *The Paradine Case*, he carries a cello off a train. Then, in the 1951 flick ***Strangers on a Train*** [image 2], Hitchcock struggles to board a different train, this time lugging an unwieldy double bass.

Moviegoers would yell out, "There's Hitch!" right in the middle of the theater.

2

3

NARCISSISM IS THE MOTHER OF INVENTION

It wasn't always easy for Hitchcock to squeeze into his movies. *Dial M for Murder* (1954), for instance, took place almost entirely in one room and had only 10 roles. To make a spot for himself, Hitchcock snuck into a photo of a class reunion hanging on the wall. ***Lifeboat*** (1944) [image 3] was an even tougher challenge. It was set in the middle of the Atlantic Ocean, where no extras could possibly appear. Hitchcock solved the problem by placing himself in a newspaper as the "before and after" pictures in a weight-loss ad. Hitch also used the cameo to poke fun at his notorious girth.

HIS FINAL APPEARANCES

As the years passed by, Hitchcock's cameos grew so famous that they became something of a game for his audiences. Moviegoers would yell out, "There's Hitch!" right in the middle of the theater. Always the consummate storyteller, Hitchcock didn't want anything to detract from his narrative, so he started placing his cameos as early in the films as possible. As a result, Hitchcock usually surfaces in the first 10 minutes of his final movies. A classic example is 1959's *North by Northwest*, in which Hitchcock shows up right after his name in the opening credits, just missing the bus.

4

For his last movie, 1976's ***Family Plot*** [image 4], Hitchcock made an exception to his rule about showing up early. Forty minutes into the film, he appears as a shadow on a glass door, arguing with an old lady. The door is ominously labeled "Registrar of Births and Deaths." Just four years later, the Master of Suspense passed away.

FIND OUT: What Your Favorite Movies Were Almost Called. Plus, 5 Famous Actors and the Roles They Turned Down
These important stories are at mentalfloss.com/more

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SPAGHETTI WESTERNS

Great Foods from the Frontier

Okay, spaghetti wasn't invented in the American West. But these other amazing foods were.

BY ANDREW SAMSON

FORTUNE COOKIES ORDERED IN THE COURT

Fortune cookies were definitely invented in California, but whether they came from Los Angeles or San Francisco is a matter of debate. Some claim that in 1918, Los Angeles baker David Jung put positive fortunes in cookies as a way to offer encouragement to the poor and the homeless. Others claim that in 1914, Makoto Hagiwara, a landscape architect in San Francisco, created the cookies to send as thank-you notes to friends and neighbors. To settle the argument over the cookie's origins once and for all, a mock trial was held in San Francisco in 1983. During the proceedings, the team representing San Francisco's case handed the judge a fortune that read, "S.F. judge who rules for L.A. not very smart cookie." Apparently, the tactic worked, and the court ruled in favor of San Francisco.

THE EGG McMUFFIN: BORN OF McLOVIN'

Herb Peterson loved the McDonald's he ran in Santa Barbara, California. He also loved eggs Benedict. One fine morning in 1972, he combined his two passions and created the Egg McMuffin—a slice of grilled Canadian bacon on top of a steamed egg on top of a slice of American cheese, all squeezed into an English muffin. Peterson thought it was a great idea, but McDonald's founder Ray Kroc thought it was "crazy." In fact, the company reprimanded Peterson for serving the breakfast food without authorization. But when Kroc saw how much customers liked the new sandwich, he changed his McMind. Within a few years, McDonald's across America began opening up for breakfast, with the tasty treat on top of the menu.

DR. PEPPER'S LONELY HEARTS CLUB BAND

America's proud tradition of syrupy soda began in Morrison's Old Corner Drug Store in Waco, Texas. There, in 1885, a pharmacist named Charles Alderton created a 23-flavor beverage. He gave the recipe to his boss, Wade Morrison, who served it in the soda fountain. Soon, customers came from far and wide to taste the new drink, which Morrison renamed Dr Pepper. So, was there a real Dr. Pepper? Surprisingly, yes. For years, historians believed the drink was named for Dr. Charles T. Pepper, the pharmacist who gave Morrison his first job. But it turns out that Morrison was trying to impress another Pepper M.D. who lived nearby. Rumor has it, Morrison had a crush on the doc's daughter, Minerva Pepper.

RICE-A RONI, THE NOT SO FRISCO TREAT

If you watched daytime television in the 1970s or 1980s, you know that Rice a Roni is "The San Francisco Treat." But don't let that super-catchy jingle fool you, the product was actually based on an Armenian recipe of rice pilaf, vermicelli pasta, and chicken broth. In the 1940s, a San Francisco housewife named Lois DeDomenico borrowed the recipe from her Armenian landlord and served the dish to her family who happened to own a pasta company. After her brother-in-law Vince took a few bites, he said, "This would be great in a box." And just like that, Rice-a-Roni was born.

MORE FOOD FOR THOUGHT: Delicious Origins of Our Favorite Mall Snacks. And where are these "Thousand Islands?" Head to mentalfloss.com/more

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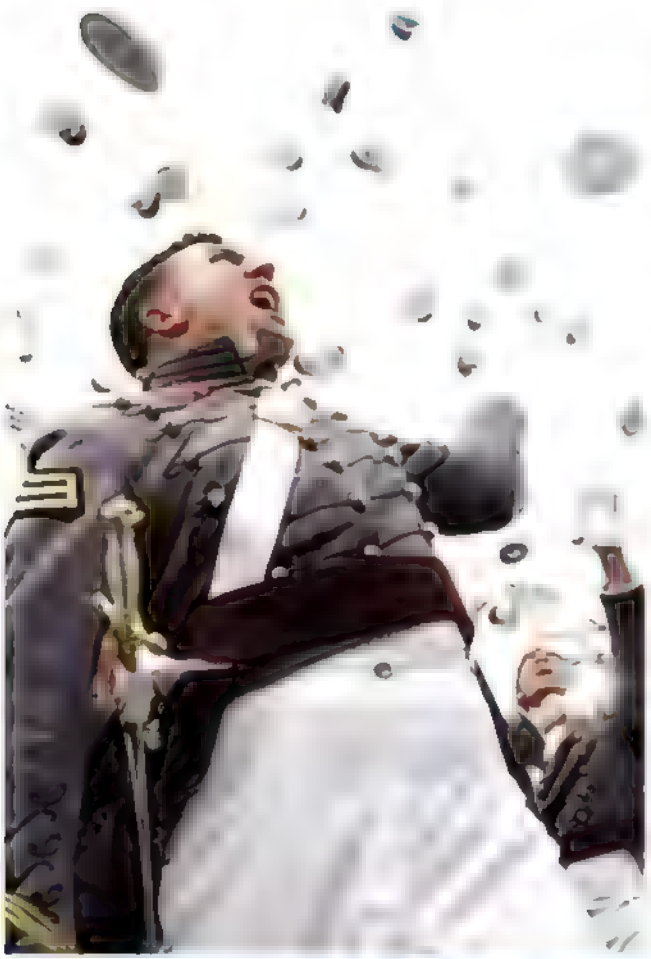
17 Essential Talking Points for the West Point Enthusiast

BY EMILY LEITHAUSER



1. The United States Military Academy is located in West Point, N.Y., a small town overlooking the Hudson River.
2. During the American Revolution, George Washington considered it to be the most strategic place in the nation. He thought it was useful in preventing the British from sailing upriver and dividing the colonies.
3. It also happens to be the place that Benedict Arnold tried to sell to the British
4. The entire West Point facility covers approximately 25 square miles, making it slightly larger than Manhattan.
5. The population doesn't quite compare, though. About 8,000 people live in West Point, and 4,500 of those are cadets.
6. West Point does have one big-city advantage, however; it's one of the few places in America that has a McDonald's that delivers.
7. And those Golden Arches aren't the only treasure in town. West Point is also considered the "Fort Knox of Silver." The depository houses much of the country's silver, and the vaults also hold more than $100 billion worth of gold
8. Edgar Allan Poe was not a fan of his West Point education. He once tried to get expelled by attending a parade where gloves and a belt were required. He showed up wearing those two things and nothing else.
9. **General George S. Patton struggled at West Point, too. Because of his dismal math grades, it took Patton an extra year to graduate.**
10. **(Even then, he graduated at the bottom of his class!)**
11. On the other side of the spectrum, the Class of 1915 is referred to as "the Class the Stars Fell On." It produced both a future president, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, and General Omar Nelson Bradley, the highest-ranking military man in American history next to George Washington.
12. According to West Point lore, if a cadet is failing a class, the night before the final exam he should put on full dress uniform and go to the statue of Civil War General John Sedgwick. At the stroke of midnight, the cadet should spin the spurs of the General's boots for luck.
13. Normally, being out after midnight is against the rules, but for the sake of this ritual, authorities look the other way.
14. Speaking of traditions, West Point also started the idea of class rings in the 1830s
15. Only one class since then has strayed from the custom. The Class of 1879 opted for class cuff links, instead.
16. To date, the Academy has produced two presidents (Grant and Eisenhower), as well as several other notable grads, including astronaut Buzz Aldrin, painter James McNeill Whistler, and the current CEO of Wendy's and Arby's, Roland Smith.
17. Oh, and Richard Hatch from *Survivor*? He went there.

Cowboys of the Wild West would risk bruises and blood to satisfy a sweet tooth. They physically fought each other for the stick of peppermint candy that came in coffee tins

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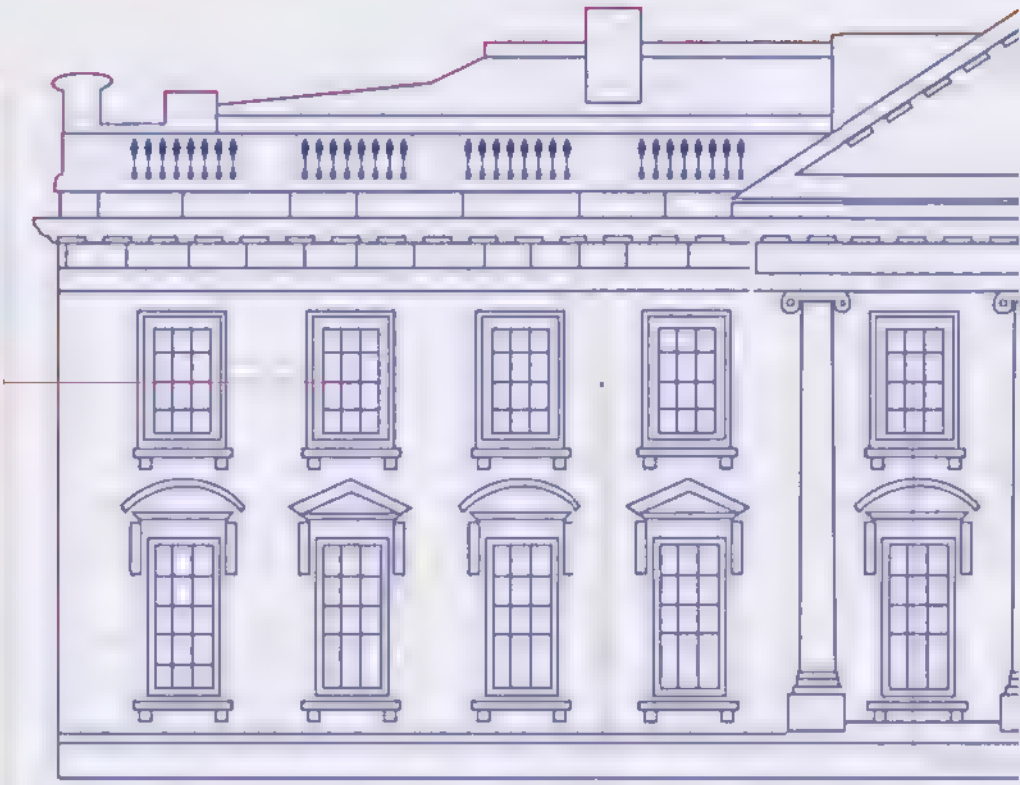
WEST WING

Mapping Out Life in the White House

Want to know what it's like to live at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, without all the hassle of getting elected president? We've got the blueprint right here.

BY KAREN WERNER



The Queens' Bedroom

THE PLACE WHERE WINSTON CHURCHILL LET IT ALL HANG OUT

Queens from the Netherlands, Greece, Norway, and Great Britain have all stayed in this bedroom. But perhaps the most high-maintenance guest was Winston Churchill. During his visits with Roosevelt and Truman in the 1940s, the Prime Minister stayed up into the wee hours of the night, fueling his evenings with alcohol and cigars. Once, when the Prime Minister arrived for a 24-day visit over Christmas in 1941, he scandalized the staff by ordering them to bring brandy to his room (then known as the Rose Room). And while the late-night order wasn't particularly shocking, the fact that he was always stark naked when they opened his door was!

The Central Hallway

THE PLACE FOR "SEXILED" PRESIDENTS

In essence, the White House is a traditional American home, with a central hallway on every floor and rooms running along either side of it. This layout came in handy in 1860, when the young Prince of Wales (who later became King Edward VII) visited President James Buchanan. Apparently, Prince Edward rolled with an entourage so large that there weren't enough rooms to accommodate everyone. Buchanan, always the gentleman, pulled out a cot and slept in the hallway!

The cast and crew of The West Wing got an earful from a bathrobe-clad Madeleine Albright when she found them filming outside her home at 3am

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The Cosmetology Room

THE PLACE WHERE EVERYTHING GETS DONE

This small half-room next to the Private Dining Room has been a workhorse over the years. It served as a bathing area for Lincoln, an office for Eleanor Roosevelt and Bess Truman, and a painting room for Eisenhower. During the Kennedy administration, John-John's diapers were changed here, and during LBJ's administration, his daughter Luci did her homework in the same place. Since the Nixon era, it's mostly been a makeup and hairdressing room; though, it did see some excitement in 1989, when Barbara Bush's beloved pooch, Millie, gave birth there.

The Oval Parlor

THE PLACE WHERE ROOSEVELT INDULGED HIS CRAVINGS

Franklin Roosevelt often came to this room to relax and play poker with his friends. He also used it as his secret hiding place when he wanted to snack. According to presidential historians, Roosevelt was constantly at odds with his White House cook, Mrs. Nesbitt. The President loved fine foods like oysters and cheeses, but Nesbitt insisted on preparing plainer fare. Her cooking grew so repetitious that Roosevelt could tell the day of the week by her menu: chicken on Monday, roast beef on Tuesday, etc. One time, after too many straight days of oatmeal for breakfast, he cut out ads for Corn Flakes and Rice Krispies, just to remind Mrs. Nesbitt that other foods existed. When Nesbitt didn't take the hints, Roosevelt used the Oval Parlor for his kitchen counter-offensives. Desperate for tastier grub, Roosevelt started having trays of delicious foods snuck into the room, where Nesbitt wouldn't get wind of it.

The Cabinet Room

THE PLACE TO GET BOMBED

For years, this was a meeting room for Cabinet secretaries and advisors, but during the Lincoln administration, it was a hard place to concentrate. Lincoln's son Tad liked to dress up as a Union soldier and bomb the Cabinet Room door with a toy cannon. Today, it's the Lincoln bedroom; the Cabinet meets in the West Wing.

The West Wing's Roosevelt Room

THE PLACE WHERE FISHY THINGS

For decades, this has been the House staff meets daily, but

rechristened it the Roosevelt Room, in honor of both

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THE WORKSHEET

BY JASON ENGLISH

Part I

The Movie Setting Quiz

1. The prison in *The Shawshank Redemption* was located in what state?
   - California
   - Maine
   - Ohio

2. After becoming *Big*, Tom Hanks' character moves to New York City. In what New Jersey suburb did his family reside?
   - Denville
   - Hill Valley
   - Cliffside Park

3. What was the setting for *Dancer, Texas Population 81*?
   - Dancer, Texas (Population: 81)
   - Ashley, North Dakota (Population: 882)
   - Searchlight, Nevada (Population: 576)

Part II

Pardon Me

1 → a) George W. Bush / b) George H.W. Bush / c) Ronald Reagan

2 → a) George W. Bush / b) Ronald Reagan / c) Gerald Ford

3 → a) Bill Clinton / b) Jimmy Carter / c) Gerald Ford

The '50s Style Spelling Bee

In the 1950s, knowing these words could have earned you a National Spelling Bee title. Can you pick the correct spelling of these winning words?

1951

[illegible] casual lack of concern; indifference
- a) insouciant
- b) insucient
- c) insousient

1954

[illegible] either of the two parts forming the arms of the cross shape
- a) trancept
- b) transept
- c) trancep

1957

[illegible] a yarn or fabric made from waste silk
- a) schap
- b) shappe
- c) schappe

1959

Definition: a boat with twin hulls in parallel
- a) cattamaran
- b) katamaran
- c) catamaran

PART I: 1. c (In 1994, Stir Hormeyer was convicted for making [illegible] contributions to the Nixon campaign and obstruction of justice.) 2. b (Through long before he was revealed [illegible] to have been [illegible] several decades.) 3. a (Nominated for [illegible] a Golden Globe after playing Gerald Ford in 1976's Oh, Mr. Ford.)

PART II: 1. b (Ronald Reagan's second day in office made good on a campaign promise and pardoned a[illegible] Army who evaded the draft.)

PART III: 1951 a (insouciant) 1954 b (transept) 1957 c (schappe) 1959 c (catamaran)

Need some trivia to wash down your PB&J?
Check out the Daily Lunch Quiz at mentalfloss.com

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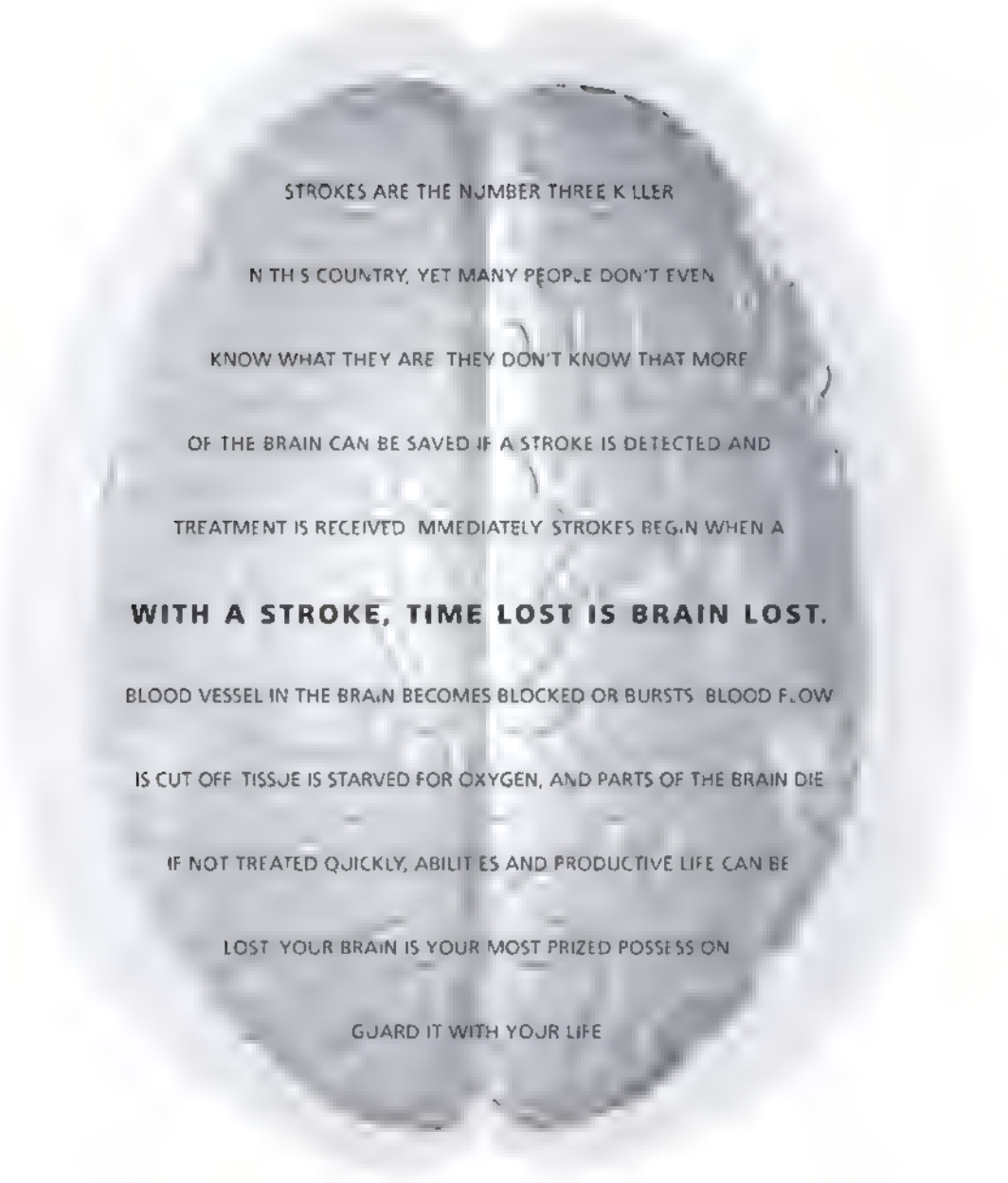
STROKES ARE THE NUMBER THREE K LLER
N TH S COUNTRY, YET MANY PEOPLE DON'T EVEN
KNOW WHAT THEY ARE THEY DON'T KNOW THAT MORE
OF THE BRAIN CAN BE SAVED IF A STROKE IS DETECTED AND
TREATMENT IS RECEIVED MMEDIATELY STROKES BEG.N WHEN A
WITH A STROKE, TIME LOST IS BRAIN LOST.
BLOOD VESSEL IN THE BRAIN BECOMES BLOCKED OR BURSTS BLOOD F.OW
IS CUT OFF TISSUE IS STARVED FOR OXYGEN, AND PARTS OF THE BRAIN DIE
IF NOT TREATED QUICKLY, ABILIT ES AND PRODUCTIVE LIFE CAN BE
LOST YOUR BRAIN IS YOUR MOST PRIZED POSSESS ON
GUARD IT WITH YOUR LIFE

If you suddenly have or see any of these symptoms, call 9-1-1 immediately: Numbness or weakness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body • Confusion, trouble speaking or understanding • Difficulty seeing in one or both eyes • Trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination • Severe headache with no known cause

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THE 10 ISSUE

10 Provocative Questions About Raising Chickens ..... pg. 26
10 Works of Literature that Were Ridiculously Hard to Write ..... pg. 30
10 Prostitutes Who Altered the Fate of the Universe ..... pg. 36
10 Outsider Artists Worth Knowing ..... pg. 42
10 Things You Don't Know About Afghanistan ..... pg. 50
10 Amazing Ways Video Games Can Change Your Life ..... pg. 59
10 Not-So-Bright Ideas in Science ..... pg. 64

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10 PROVOCATIVE QUESTIONS ABOUT RAISING CHICKENS

. . . Answered!

by Megan Wirth

01

Where do chickens come from?

The post office, of course! Every year, hatcheries send millions of newborn chicks through the mail. The only caveat is that you usually have to order at least 25 at a time so that the babies can keep each other warm in their perforated shipping boxes. Once they're in transit, chicks can survive for three days without food or water, thanks to the egg yolk they eat before they hatch. That's just enough time for the U.S. Postal Service to deliver them from hatcheries in the Midwest to places as far away as Hawaii and Alaska.

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02

Is there really a pecking order?

Absolutely. Chickens establish a social hierarchy from an early age by pecking each other. The birds at the top of the order get pecked the least; the birds at the bottom get pecked the most. Roosters usually rank the highest, though occasionally an alpha hen will dominate. Meanwhile, the low-ranking hens have the most difficult time getting food. On the plus side, they're often the most attractive mates.

When a chicken is added or removed from a flock, the other birds can become extremely disturbed, pecking furiously at each other in an effort to reestablish their places in the hierarchy. In fact, new chickens sometimes get pecked to death. For this reason, farmers will often sneak in new birds in the dead of night. When the flock wakes up, they simply assume the new birds were there all along.

03

What is pasty butt, and how do I prevent it?

Chickens have a multipurpose hole for excrement, eggs, and mating called the cloacal vent. If this hole becomes clogged with excrement—a condition known as pasty butt—a young chicken can get backed up and die. Without a mother hen to clean them, baby chicks raised by humans are particularly susceptible to pasty butt. That's why chicken keepers must be vigilant in monitoring and cleaning their brood's bottoms.

04

How do chickens survive in the wild?

They don't, really. Chickens are thought to have descended from Red Jungle Fowl in Southeast Asia, and they were probably domesticated around 3000 BCE, first for cockfighting and later for eggs and meat. Having been bred and coddled by people for millennia, modern-day chickens can't make it on their own, mainly because they're prey for so many other creatures. The short list of animals that love chicken dinners includes raccoons, skunks, hawks, owls, foxes, coyotes, mountain lions, rats, and weasels. Weasels are particularly voracious chicken eaters. They can devour dozens of birds in one night, and in their feeding frenzies, they often decapitate more poultry than they can eat.

05

HOW DO I HYPNOTIZE A CHICKEN?

The chicken mind is an easy thing to control, and chicken handlers have found several ways of hypnotizing the birds. Here are three surefire ways to make a chicken very, very sleepy:

HOLD A CHICKEN'S HEAD UNDER ITS WING AND GENTLY ROCK ITS BODY.

HOLD A CHICKEN UPSIDE DOWN AND WIGGLE A FINGER IN CIRCLES AROUND ITS BEAK

STARE INTENTLY INTO A CHICKEN'S EYES.

Generally, they'll stay spellbound for several minutes, or even hours, until a loud noise snaps them out of their trance. Scientists think this state is a form of tonic immobility, a defense mechanism in which animals "play dead" in order to shake off a predator. Hypnotized chickens can be pretty useful, though. Former Vice President Al Gore recalls using them as doorstops during his childhood days on his family's farm.

06

How do you stop chickens from killing each other?

Believe it or not, this is a big problem. All chickens will naturally peck at other chickens, especially if they're bored or overcrowded. And once the pecking starts, it often won't stop until one bird is dead. The strangest part is that chickens actually love the taste of chicken! Plus, they'll flock to peck at anything red, including blood and raw skin. So when a bird gets injured, it becomes even more of a target.

How do you bring order to the coop? On large farms, handlers try to prevent chicken cannibalism by trimming the birds' beaks. Another tactic is to clamp tiny goggles onto their heads, which impairs their vision and prevents them from seeing each other well. And to stave off boredom, farmers often give chickens things like cabbages and tin pans to play with, or let them range free.

Mating can also be deadly for a chicken. Occasionally, a cock will mount a hen too vigorously, leaving bald spots and claw marks on her back, known as "rooster tracks." The injured hens then become subject to cannibalism. To avoid this, farmers strap little aprons, called hen saddles, to their hens' backs, which allow the chickens to have protected sex.

07

I've heard cocks don't have penises. Is that true?

For all our talk of the birds and the bees, this answer somehow tends to get glossed over. It's true that roosters don't actually have penises. Instead, a rooster's reproductive organs are neatly packed inside its cloacal vent. When he's ready to mate, he grabs hold of a hen's neck and jumps on her back. When their vents touch—in what's called a cloacal kiss—the rooster deposits his sperm. Hens release about one egg per day, and one "kiss" can fertilize her eggs for up to a week. But even if there isn't a rooster around, hens will still lay eggs. In fact, most store-bought eggs are unfertilized, because they have the same nutritional value as fertilized ones.

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08

So, what exactly is a gizzard?

Chickens can eat almost anything—table scraps, cat food, gold, even Styrofoam thanks to a wondrous organ called the gizzard. As chickens forage, they eat small pebbles and store them there. Then, when the gizzard muscles churn, these tiny bits of stone act like teeth to pulverize the food. If chickens are raised entirely in cages, they must be fed gravel for their gizzards to work.

09

Is it difficult to catch chickens?

Yes. Trying to chase down loose chickens can often be humiliating. Chickens can run up to 9 mph, and they have the ability to fly into trees. They can also zigzag like professional football players. Worse still, if one starts to panic, the whole flock will scatter. Hooks and fishing nets can be helpful in grabbing a chicken, but the easiest way is to pluck one from its coop at night, when it's sound asleep.

PARTICIPANTS SWING THE BIRDS AROUND THEIR HEADS THREE TIMES AS THEY PRAY, TRANSFERRING THEIR SINS TO THE FOWL.

10

Are chickens magical?

Perhaps. Throughout history, various cultures have kept chickens for divination and religious rites, and some still do. Ancient Romans believed strongly in using chickens to foretell the future. There was even a public flock that authorities maintained specifically to predict affairs of state. If the roosters dropped some food when they emerged from their coop in the morning, good things were in store for the Republic.

Today, the Azande tribe of Sudan uses chickens like Magic 8-Balls. Basically, they poison a chicken and ask it questions. If the chicken dies, the answer is yes; if the chicken lives, the answer is no. Similarly, in Cambodia, cocks are believed to be messengers of the gods. Lastly, some orthodox Jews use chickens in a ceremony leading up to Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. Participants swing the birds around their heads three times as they pray, transferring their sins to the fowl. The chickens are then ritually slaughtered and given to the poor.

NEED MORE CHICKEN FACTS? Even More Answers to Questions about Chickens, Photos of Chicken Farming in the Big City at mentalfloss.com/more

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10 Works of Literature that Were Ridiculously Hard to Write

...

Instead of judging works of literature based on their artistic merit, we've decided to rank them by degree of difficulty. These 10 authors may not be Shakespeare, but they sure had vaulting ambitions.

...

BY MARK JUDDERY

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01

THE STORY THAT WILL NEVER BE AN E-BOOK

Gadsby by Ernest Vincent Wright

Some might call *Gadsby* a "love" story. But Ernest Vincent Wright wouldn't have used that word. Instead, he described his novel as a story of "strong liking" and "throbbing palpitation." That's because in 1939, Wright gave himself one restriction: He promised to write *Gadsby* without using the letter E.

Wright wanted to prove that a great author could work around such a restriction and still tell a gripping story. To prevent any stray Es from entering the text, he tied down his typewriter's E key, and then put his expansive vocabulary to the test. The result is an astounding feat of verbal gymnastics. While vividly describing a wedding scene, Wright manages to avoid the words "bride," "ceremony," and even "wedding" (he calls it "a grand church ritual"). To explain away the verbosity of the language, he uses a narrator whose poor command of English and circumlocution even irritates the story's other characters.

When the book was announced, one skeptic attacked Wright in a letter, claiming that the feat was impossible. "All right," replied Wright in the book's intro, "the impossible has been accomplished." Sadly, Wright didn't live long enough to revel in *Gadsby*'s critical acclaim. He died the year the book was published.

02

THE TALE TOLD IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE

The Diving Bell and the Butterfly by Jean-Dominique Bauby

Many authors have struggled through illness and injury to write their masterpieces, but none more so than Jean-Dominique Bauby, editor-in-chief of French fashion magazine *Elle*. In 1995, at the age of 43, Bauby suffered a major stroke and slipped into a coma. He regained consciousness two days later, but his entire body—with the exception of his left eyelid—was paralyzed.

Still, Bauby was determined to write. Using only his lucid mind and one eye, he began working on his memoir, *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly*. Each night, he'd lie awake editing and re-editing the story in his mind, memorizing every paragraph as he hoped to relay it. By day, his transcriber would recite the alphabet to him over and over. When she reached a letter Bauby desired, he'd wink. Each word took about two minutes to produce, and during the course of a year, Bauby managed to tell his story of life in paralysis. His moving and often funny prose won critical acclaim, and *The Diving Bell and the Butterfly* became a bestseller throughout Europe. Sadly, Bauby died of pneumonia in 1997, soon after the first edition was published in France. He missed not only the English translation, but also the award-winning film adaptation released in 2007.

03

THE POETRY OF SPEED

Transcendence-Perfection by Sri Chinmoy

Before his death in 2007, Indian spiritual master Sri Chinmoy wrote at least 1,000 books, 20,000 songs, and 115,000 poems. Some he penned in his mother tongue, Bengali, and some in his second language, English. His poems won numerous awards and inspired countless writers and musicians. And while Sri Chinmoy was clearly a fast writer, he was never as quick as on November 1, 1975, when he wrote *Transcendence-Perfection*, a collection of 843 poems—all written in 24 hours.

How was Sri Chinmoy so prolific? He believed the key was meditation. As he once explained, "The outer mind is like the surface of the sea. On the surface, the sea is full of waves and surges ... But when we dive deep below, the same sea is all peace, calmness and quiet, and there we find the source of creativity."

04

THE MOST VISIONARY STORY EVER TOLD

Futility by Morgan Robertson

Occasionally, literature is prophetic. H.G. Wells' stories, for instance, predicted video recordings, portable television, aerial bombings, and a Second World War starting in 1940 (only one year late). And a 1941 comic book written by Gil Fox described the bombing of Pearl Harbor in surprising detail, precisely one month before it happened.

But perhaps the most meticulously prophetic work of literature is Morgan Robertson's short and poorly written novel, *Futility*. In it, Robertson describes the maiden voyage of a British luxury liner called the *Titan*, which claims to be unsinkable but sinks anyway after hitting an iceberg. Nearly every detail resembles the story of the *Titanic*. Of course, nobody thought about that when *Futility* was released in 1898, a full 14 years before the *Titanic* set sail.

Amazingly, *Futility* wasn't Robertson's only prescient piece of literature. In 1912, three years before his death, he wrote *Beyond the Spectrum*. Much like Gil Fox's tale, Robertson's story predicted a Japanese sneak attack on an American fleet in Hawaii, and the resulting war between the two countries.

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05

HISTORY'S GREATEST SONNET

Washington Crossing the Delaware by David Shulman

Etymologist David Shulman was a true lover of words. One of the most prolific contributors to the Oxford English Dictionary, Shulman tracked down the roots of Americanisms for more than 70 years. But those weren't Shulman's only contributions to the world. During World War II, he served in the army and used his language skills to crack Japanese codes. His most astonishing feat as a wordsmith, however, occurred in 1936, when he composed the sonnet *Washington Crossing the Delaware*.

What makes the poem so remarkable is that every one of Shulman's 14 lines is an anagram of the title. What's more, the lines are rhyming couplets, and they tell a story, more or less. Here's an excerpt.

A hard, howling, tossing water scene.
Strong tide was washing hero clean.
"How cold!" Weather stings as in anger
O Silent night shows war ace danger!

As poetry, it isn't exactly Walt Whitman. But then, Whitman was never this good with anagrams.

06

SIX POWERFUL WORDS

"Baby Shoes" by Ernest Hemingway

According to legend, Ernest Hemingway created the shortest short story ever told. While having lunch at New York City's famous Algonquin Round Table, Hemingway bragged that he could write a captivating tale—complete with beginning, middle, and end—in only six words. His fellow writers refused to believe it, each betting $10 that he couldn't do it. Hemingway quickly scribbled six words down on a napkin and passed it around. As each writer read the napkin, they conceded he'd won. Those six words? "For sale. Baby shoes. Never worn."

While the anecdote may be apocryphal, whoever *did* write "Baby Shoes" has forced writers forever after to consider the economy of words. Today, the work has inspired countless six-word memoir and story competitions, proving that a story's brevity is no limit to its power.

07

THE STORY OF YOUTH

The Young Visiters by Daisy Ashford

Daisy Ashford's novella about Victorian society is considered something of a classic. First published in 1919, the work is still in print and has been turned into a movie. But if that doesn't sound remarkable, consider that Ashford was only 9 years old when she wrote it. To preserve the authenticity of the story, publishers decided to leave in Ashford's plentiful grammar mistakes and spelling errors (the title, for example). They also added a foreword by *Peter Pan* author J.M. Barrie to assure readers that this was no hoax. Barrie reminded people that the novel was indeed written by a little girl, who was "hauled off to bed every evening at six."

• • •

Hemingway bragged that he could write a captivating tale—complete with beginning, middle, and end—in only six words.

• • •

Hemingway (far left) dines with actor Spencer Tracy and others at the Stork Club, New York City, 1953.

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08

WRITING BY EAR

Anguish Languish
by Howard L. Chace

Sinker sucker socks pants, apocryphal awry. If those words don't make sense together, try saying them out loud: "Sing a song of sixpence, a pocketful of rye." Now imagine a whole book written like this, and you've got Howard L. Chace's 1940 collection of nursery rhymes and fairy tales, *Anguish Languish*. The work contains classics such as *Marry Hatter Ladle Limb* and *Ladle Rat Rotten Hut*, which begins with the immortal line, "Wants pawn term, dare worsted ladle gull hoe lift wetter murder inner ladle cordage." Although *Anguish Languish* is playful, there was also a serious side to it. As a French professor, Chace used the stories to illustrate that, in spoken English, intonation is almost as important to the meaning as the words themselves.

09

JAMES JOYCE'S DEAF TRANSLATION JAM

Finnegans Wake by James Joyce

James Joyce wrote his final novel, *Finnegans Wake*, during a 17-year period in Paris, finishing the work just two years before his death in 1941. During that time, Joyce was nearly blind, so he dictated his stream-of-consciousness prose to his friend, Samuel Beckett. That led to some unexpected results. For example, during one session, Joyce heard a knock at the door, which was too quiet for Beckett to perceive. Joyce yelled to the visitor, "Come in!" so Beckett added "Come in!" to the manuscript. When Beckett later read the passage back to Joyce, the author decided that he liked it better that way.

After several such sessions, *Finnegans Wake* became one of the most impenetrable works of English literature. But the experience didn't just affect Joyce's novel; it seemed to have a lasting effect on Beckett's writing, as well. Beckett would go on to become a leading playwright in the Theatre of the Absurd, where his characters often spent their entire time on stage sitting in the middle of nowhere, hoping that someone would hear their voice.

The Art of Writing by Committee

Many American presidents have written books, but only Franklin Roosevelt has contributed to a mystery novel. At a White House dinner in 1935, Roosevelt pitched his story idea to author Fulton Oursler. Roosevelt's tale started like this: A man named Jim Blake is trapped in a stale marriage and a boring job. He dreams of running off with $5 million and starting over with a new identity.

Unfortunately, the President hadn't worked out one major plot point. How does a man with $5 million disappear without being traced?

To solve the problem, Oursler formed a committee of five other top mystery writers: Rupert Hughes, Samuel Hopkins Adams, Rita Weiman, S. S. Van Dine, and John Erskine. Each author wrote a chapter and ended it with Jim Blake in a terrible situation, which the next author was left to resolve. Despite being the work of a Washington committee, the end result was surprisingly successful. *The President's Mystery Story* was serialized in a magazine, published as a book, and even turned into a movie in 1936.

Yet, the writers never came up with a solution to Roosevelt's original problem. That didn't happen until 1967, when Erle Stanley Gardner wrote a final chapter to a new edition of the book. In it, the secret to Jim Blake's mysterious disappearance is discovered by Gardner's most famous character, Perry Mason.

4 Must-Read Books for Aspiring Authors
Great Works That Originally Got Bad Reviews
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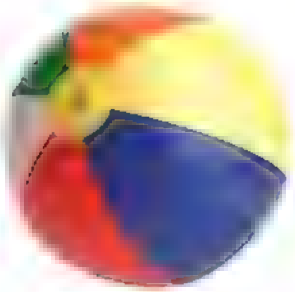
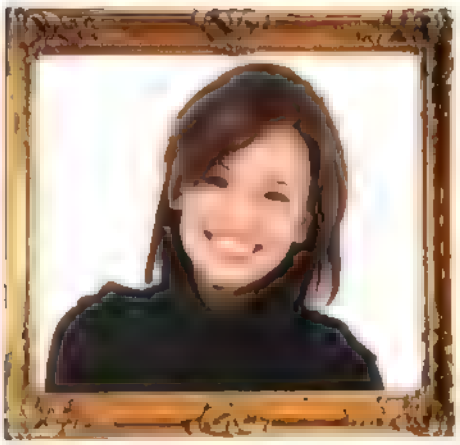


Beach Ball: *(noun):* large and light spherical toy; usually used for games at the pool or seaside.

Tree Frog: *(noun):* any of numerous small anuran amphibians, especially of the family Hylidae, usually having adhesive disks at the tip of each toe.



Mensa Member: *(noun)* undefined.

There are some things in life that are easily defined; others aren't so quick to be boiled-down. Mensa members fall into the latter category. With members from every walk of life, career and background, Mensa offers the kind of variety and intellectual stimulation that you'd be hard-pressed to find anywhere else.

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10 PROSTITUTES WHO ALTERED the fate of the UNIVERSE

BY LINDA RODRIGUEZ

Call girls, rent boys, courtesans, gigolos—whatever you want to call them, there's no question that prostitutes have shaped the course of human events.

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Valerie Jean Solanas, in 1968, being taken into custody by the police for the shooting of Andy Warhol

01

Mike Jones: Gay Avenger

Mike Jones got paid for sex by a lot of prominent men in Colorado, including athletes, politicians, and businessmen. But between 2003 and 2006, one of his best clients was a man he called Art—a man the rest of the world knew as Reverend Ted Haggard. A leader of the Christian Evangelical movement, Haggard had founded the massive 14,000-member New Life Church in Colorado Springs and become president of the National Association of Evangelicals. As part of his teachings, he denounced homosexuality and gay marriage.

In November 2006, Colorado citizens were scheduled to vote on domestic partnerships. The proposed measure, known as Referendum I, would give equal rights to gay couples, and Haggard and his church were mobilizing support against it. Disturbed by Haggard's hypocrisy, Jones outed his long-time client on a Denver talk radio show. He disclosed that not only had Haggard repeatedly paid him for sex, but that the Reverend had also purchased crystal meth from him. Jones hoped that by exposing Haggard as a fraud, it might dampen his influence on the election.

Although the referendum failed, Jones' announcement rocked the evangelical world. An independent oversight committee soon found Haggard guilty of "sexually immoral conduct," and he was stripped of his pastorship. Haggard now works as an insurance salesman, and the evangelical movement is still recovering from the scandal.

02

The Woman Who Shot Andy Warhol ... and Shut Down the Factory

Valerie Jean Solanas, a former Catholic schoolgirl turned prostitute, shot—and very nearly killed—Pop icon Andy Warhol. In the process, she ended an artistic era.

Solanas was born in New Jersey in 1936. Her home was never a stable place, with domestic abuse and alcoholism dominating her family life. Solanas' parents divorced when she was young, and her teen years were marked by a rebelliousness that belied her fierce intelligence. Still, Solanas graduated from high school and went on to the University of Maryland, where she majored in psychology. It was while working in a lab there that Solanas claimed to find scientific proof that men were a genetic accident—a belief she held strongly to for the rest of her life.

After dropping out of a master's program at the University of Minnesota, Solanas began panhandling her way across the country. In 1960, she landed in New York City, where she worked the streets as a prostitute. The profession soon became part of her burgeoning feminist ideology, and Solanas poured herself into founding a group called SCUM, the Society for Cutting Up Men. She also made waves with her self-published political tract, the SCUM Manifesto, which advocated the extermination of men and the establishment of a self-propagating female society.

Solanas claimed to find scientific proof that men were a genetic accident—a belief she held strongly to for the rest of her life.

Solanas had hopes of becoming a key member of Andy Warhol's full-time art experiment, the Factory. The likes of Lou Reed, Mick Jagger, Truman Capote, and numerous characters on the fringe of society used the Factory to get lost in art, music, orgies, and drugs. But when Solanas approached Warhol about producing her play, "Up Your Ass," his reaction was mixed. Although Warhol loved the title, he claimed that the play was too outrageous for him. He did, however, give her a part in one of his films and $25 for her time.

The act did little to mollify Solanas. By 1968, her paranoia had given way to full-blown schizophrenia. She began stalking Warhol, claiming that he'd promised to produce her play and that he owed her money. On June 3, after Warhol continued to ignore her, Solanas waited for the artist in the lobby of his Union Square studio. When he approached, she pulled a .32-caliber pistol from her pocket and shot him. The bullet ripped through his lung, spleen, stomach, and

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liver. At the hospital, he flatlined for a minute and a half before doctors were able to revive him. Then a surgeon opened up his chest and operated on him for five hours. For the rest of his life, Warhol was forced to wear a corset to hold his body together.

That night, Solanas turned herself in to the police and later pleaded guilty to attempted murder. She served only three years in prison, but then spent the rest of her life in and out of mental institutions. She also continued to harass Warhol by phone. In 1988, her decomposing body was discovered in her rented room in the Tenderloin district of San Francisco, where she'd again turned to prostitution to support herself.

As for Warhol, he never recovered from the shooting. And neither did the Factory. No longer open to anyone and everyone, the Factory lost its edge, and Warhol lost contact with the absurd masses that had inspired his Pop empire. Instead, the artist transferred his affections to a handful of wealthy friends who could pay for his work .. and probably wouldn't shoot him.

Belle de Jour: The Call Girl with a Nerdy Secret Identity

In 2003, a new force hit the blogosphere: Belle de Jour and her "Diary of a London Call Girl." Belle was a high-class prostitute who wrote wittily about her £300-an-hour, part-time job, often saying that the men who paid for her services were kinder to her than men who took her out on real dates. In 2003, Britain's *Guardian* declared "Diary of a London Call Girl" the best-written blog of the year.

As her fame grew, Belle de Jour landed a column in London's *Sunday Telegraph* and wrote two books. In 2007, her collected works were turned into a series that was picked up by Showtime. All the while, Belle's identity remained a closely guarded secret.

That is, until November 2009. Claiming that a big-mouth ex-boyfriend was about to blow the whistle, Belle de Jour came out of the literary closet, unmasking herself as .. a lab-coat-wearing medical researcher! Dr. Brooke Magnanti, a pretty blonde who spends her days researching childhood cancers, revealed to the world that she spent 14 months as a high-price escort in order to pay off loans and save up money. "The particular situation I was in was far less dangerous than streetwalking," she told *New Scientist* magazine. "And [it] paid sufficiently well that I didn't have to do it for very long."

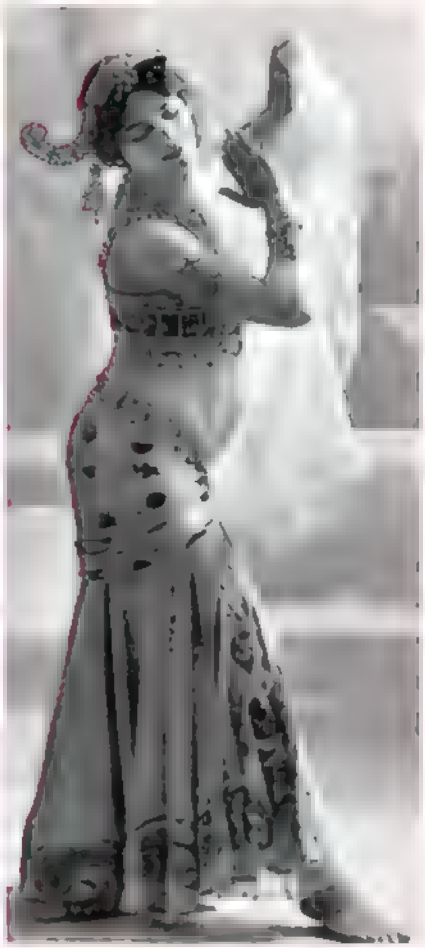
These days, science is still her passion. As Magnanti frames it, it was for love of science that she turned to prostitution in the first place. And by becoming debt-free, she was able to accept the research job of her choosing.

04
The World's First Transsexual Member of Parliament

Georgina Beyer, the world's first transsexual Member of Parliament, was born George Bertrand in 1957. She grew up a Maori farm boy in Wellington, New Zealand, and upon hitting adolescence, George began looking and feeling feminine. At age 17, George discovered the city's drag scene and hit the nightclub circuit, working first as a drag performer, then as a stripper, and finally as a male prostitute. Though strung out on drugs, George managed to save up enough money for a sex-change operation, and in 1984, George became Georgina.

A new woman, Georgina moved to Auckland and worked as an actress, often cast as a lady of the night in TV shows and movies. Six years later, she retrained as a social worker and moved to Carterton, a conservative farm town in New Zealand's heartland. Although her presence initially caused a stir, she made inroads with her charm and candor. She counseled Carterton's troubled youth and helped improve the school system, and in 1995, Beyer was elected the world's first transsexual mayor.

Four years later, the citizens of Carterton voted for Beyer again. This time sending her to Parliament, where she became the world's first transsexual MP. For eight years, the liberal Beyer represented the needs of the right-wing farmers in her district. She simultaneously fought for the rights of gays, lesbians, transsexuals, and even prostitutes. In 2002, her constituents reelected Georgina Beyer, and she served there until 2007, when she officially retired.



Mata Hari: Seductress! Spy! Scapegoat?

At dawn on October 15, 1917, a woman known the world over as Mata Hari faced a French firing squad. The famous exotic dancer had been condemned as a German spy and found guilty of compromising military intelligence, including information on Britain's new secret combat weapon, the tank. Consequently, she was charged with causing the deaths of more than 50,000 French and Allied soldiers. When the commander yelled "fire," Mata Hari left the world in the same brazen way in which she lived: refusing a blindfold and blowing a kiss to the firing squad.

Born in 1876 in the Netherlands, Margaretha Geertruida Zelle had a tumultuous childhood. Her parents divorced just as she was hitting her teens, her mother died soon after, and her father raced into

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a troubled second marriage. The unhappy circumstances saw her bouncing from one relative's home to the next. At the age of 18, while staying with an uncle, Margaretha spotted an ad in a local newspaper. Rudolf MacLeod, a Dutch Army officer, was looking for a wife to join him abroad. Margaretha volunteered, and the pair set sail for the Dutch West Indies. They had two children there, but the marriage was not a pleasant one. MacLeod drank and beat Margaretha, and he carried on affairs with other women. Then, in 1899, an even greater tragedy struck. Margaretha's son died, and she fled to Paris in sorrow. It was there that she reinvented herself. Pulling from the strands of mythology and exotic culture that she'd absorbed while living abroad, Margaretha Zelle became Mata Hari, an Indian dancer at the service of the Hindu god Shiva.

Armed with yards of sheer fabric and loads of costume jewelry, Mata Hari gyrated her way through Paris' salons to become one of the city's most celebrated courtesans. As World War I broke out, she continued to fan her legend and was often found in the company of high-ranking French and German soldiers.

On February 13, 1917, Mata Hari was arrested in her room at the Plaza Athenee hotel in Paris. Within eight months, she was tried and executed for espionage. But was Mata Hari really a spy? There's no evidence that she was ever privy to any military information of importance, and the facts of her case were dubious from the start. Today, she's been cemented in the public imagination as the archetype of a dangerous seductress and double-agent. But many historians believe that Mata Hari was just a scapegoat—a pawn in a trumped-up effort to boost morale in the war-torn country.

Jim Carroll: The Poet Laureate of Rent-Boys

When Jim Carroll died of a heart attack in 2009 at the age of 60, newspapers across the world heralded him as a genius and an "unlikely poetry prodigy." "Unlikely" because, as a teenager growing up in New York City, Carroll led a double life: prep school basketball star by day, heroin addict and male prostitute by night.

As a teenager, Carroll began turning tricks to support his drug habit. But his addiction—and the depths to which it carried him—also lent him his voice and his authenticity as a writer.

In the 1960s, the high schooler's work appeared in the *Paris Review*, and it quickly garnered Carroll comparisons to Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac. It even caught the attention of tastemaker Andy Warhol, who asked the precocious teen to write dialogue for his movies. By the 1970s, Carroll was a well-known poet. He had musical aspirations, too. With the encouragement of his singer-friend Patti Smith, Carroll launched a music career and found success with the 1980 punk hit, "People Who Died." But, in the end, it was his writing that endured. Carroll's searing 1978 autobiography, *The Basketball Diaries*, became required reading for the disaffected youth of the 1980s and 1990s. It also helped launch Leonardo DiCaprio's career as a serious actor, when he portrayed Carroll in the 1995 film version of the book.

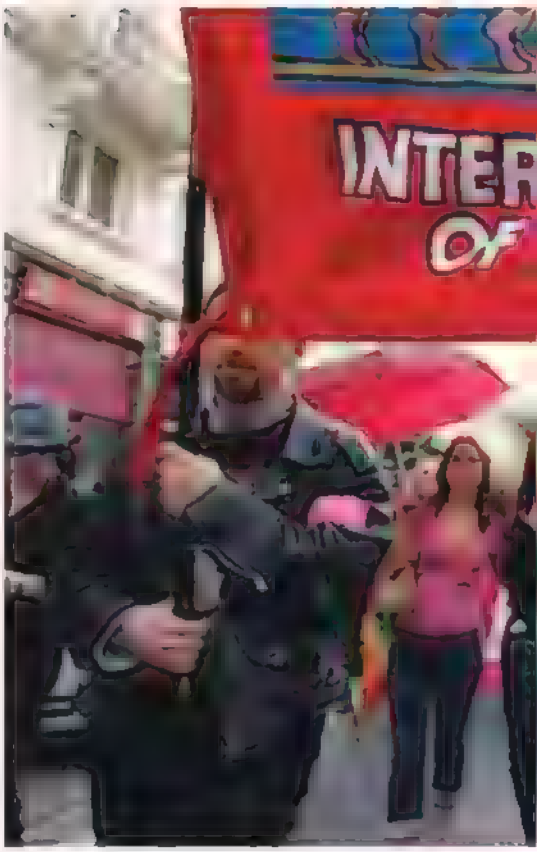
Following the murders of Jack the Ripper, Parliament enacted several pieces of legislation that cleaned up the slums and set minimum housing standards.

07
Carol Leigh: A Force for Unionization

Prostitution can be a grueling job—long hours, unsafe working conditions, no healthcare. That's why, for the past 30 years, sex workers have been unionizing.

Activist Carol Leigh, who claims to have coined the term "sex worker," has long been championing the rights of prostitutes; a tricky thing, given that the profession is illegal in her hometown and base of operations, San Francisco. Calling herself the Scarlot Harlot, Leigh has been working as a prostitute, advocate, and video artist in the Bay Area since the 1970s. She believes in legalizing and regulating the sex industry for health and safety reasons and sees the criminalization of prostitution as "another manifestation of sexism and misogyny." Her tireless work advocating for the Prostitutes Education Network and Bay SWAN, the Bay Area Sex Workers' Advocacy Network, has led to her involvement in international policy. These days, Leigh serves as a consultant on sex workers' rights in places as diverse as South Africa, Taiwan, and Hungary.

What exactly does Leigh hope to gain from unionizing? In places where prostitution is legal (which includes much of Europe), sex worker unions use their collective force to educate the public and the government about their needs. In the United Kingdom, the International Union of Sex Workers uses its funding and power to offer members free self-defense classes, legal advice, and educational opportunities. In France, the sex worker union operates like a traditional union, as well. In 2000, for instance, a coalition of prostitutes in Lyon wrote to the prime minister to protest the influx of Eastern European immigrants, claiming that the foreigners were stealing their jobs.



The Victims of Jack the Ripper

Between 1888 and 1891, London was held in the thrall of a boogeyman named Jack the Ripper. He was a killer who preyed on prostitutes, or as the papers of the day described them, ladies of "the disreputable class." Jack the Ripper was linked to the murder and mutilation of as many as 18 women in three years.

In late Victorian London, violence against prostitutes was common. But Jack the Ripper's crimes represented a departure from the norm due to their sheer savagery. His victims' throats were slashed, their faces disfigured, their genitals mutilated,

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and their internal organs removed. With the help of a burgeoning sensational media, the murders captivated and terrified people across the world.

The circumstances leading to the murders were of equal note. The crimes started taking place three years after London had cracked down on brothel keepers—a measure that cast prostitutes into the streets. The brutality of the killings forced the public to take another look at the horrors of poverty in London's East End, where women frequently turned to prostitution for lack of other opportunities. As a direct result, Parliament enacted several pieces of legislation over the next few years that cleaned up the slums, alleviated overcrowding, and set minimum housing standards.

09

Aileen Wuornos: Proof that Serial Killers Didn't Have to Be Men

Whereas Jack the Ripper made headlines as a man who killed prostitutes, Aileen Wuornos made them because she was a prostitute who killed men. Proving that women can be serial killers, too, Wuornos became known alternately as a man-hating monster and a feminist folk hero.

By all accounts, Wuornos had a rough life. Her mother abandoned her when she was a child, and her father, a child molester, was strangled in prison when she was a teenager. Raped and pregnant at 13, Wuornos gave the baby up for adoption, and two years later, she began supporting herself as a prostitute. For the next 15 years, Wuornos would be arrested for armed robbery, check forgery, grand theft auto, and assault and battery with a beer bottle.

Then things got really bad. Between 1989 and 1990, Wuornos prostituted herself along the highways of central Florida and killed seven men, each one a driver who picked her up while she was hitchhiking. At first, Wuornos claimed that each of them had attempted to rape her and that she shot them (often several times) in self-defense. Her arrest and subsequent trial catapulted Wuornos into the spotlight and captivated the American consciousness. Within weeks, she'd sold the film rights to her story. In the end, Wuornos stood trial for the first murder and confessed to the next six homicides. In 2001, after more than a decade on death row, she fired her attorneys and contested any appeals made on her behalf. "I'm one who seriously hates life and would kill again," she wrote to the Florida Supreme Court. Wuornos was executed on October 9, 2002, at the age of 46. The following year, Charlize Theron starred in the film *Monster*, based on Wuornos' life.

10

The Mistresses: Shaping History, One Smitten Ruler at a Time

Mistresses may fall into a grey area when it comes to defining prostitution, but these two ladies—Madame de Pompadour and Anne Boleyn—definitely sold their services for wealth and power. They also both changed the world.

Madame de Pompadour, mistress of Louis XV, had so much influence over her lover that she's responsible for one of the most disastrous conflicts in history. In 1755, she convinced Louis to shift his alliances from Prussia to Austria, which precipitated the catastrophic Seven Years' War. The bloodfest, which grew out of the French and Indian War in North America, extended across Europe, Africa, and India, and cost more than 1 million lives. In fact, some scholars believe it should have been deemed the First World War.

Anne Boleyn, on the other hand, helped create a whole new religion. As Henry VIII's mistress, Anne talked the royal into ousting his first wife, Catherine of Aragon, and marrying her instead. Of course, there was a catch: The Catholic Church strictly forbade divorce, so for the plan to work, Henry would have to break ties with Rome. In the end, Anne's wiles won out. In 1534, Henry disavowed the Pope and declared himself the Supreme Head of the newly created Church of England. England was no longer a Catholic nation, and the Anglican Church was born.

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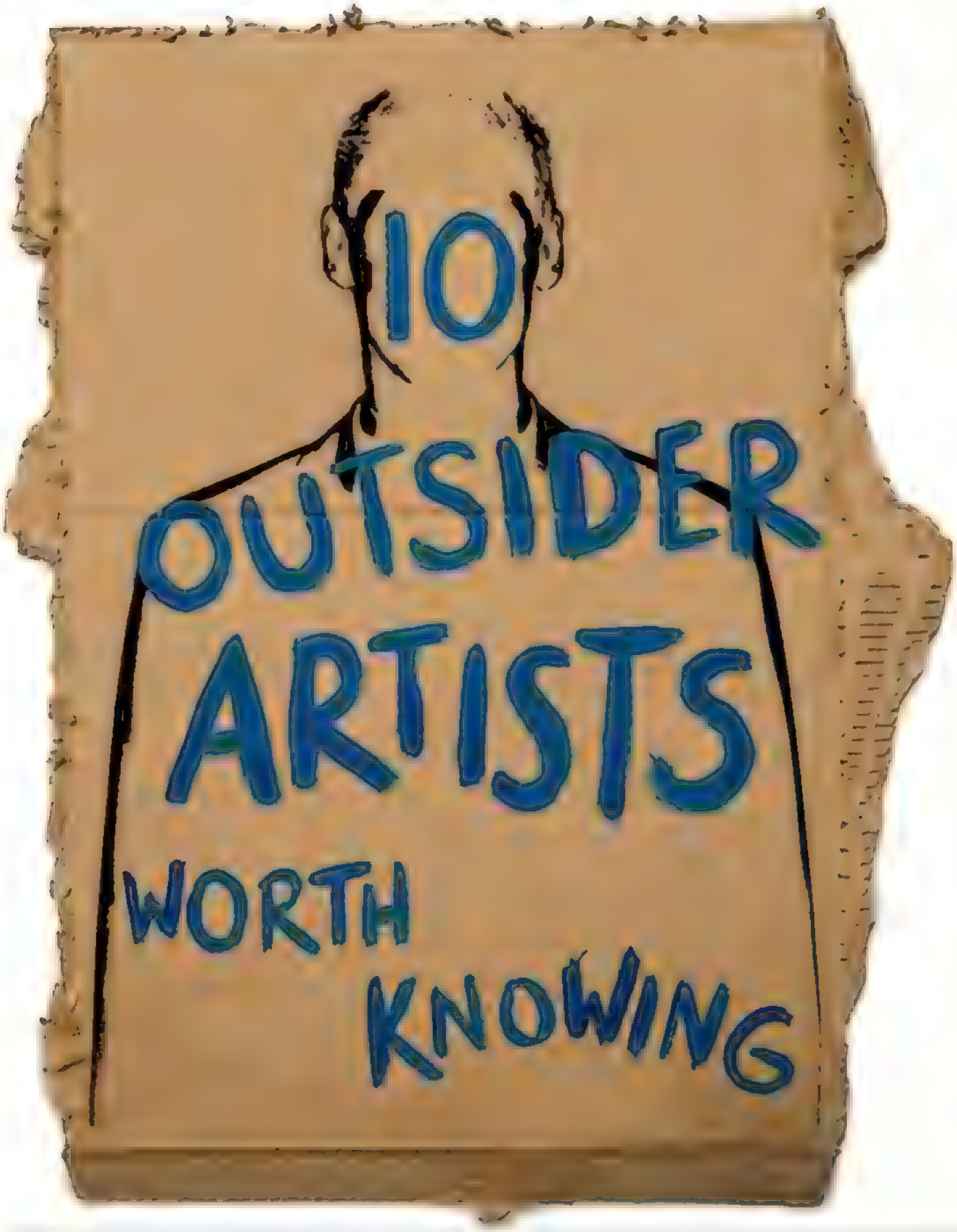

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BEYOND THE BOUNDARIES OF MAINSTREAM ART LIES A SHADOWY WORLD OF OUTSIDERS, RULED BY THE SELF-TAUGHT, THE SUBVERSIVE, AND THE INSANE. PREPARE TO BE SHOCKED AND AWED BY THE OUTLANDISH PERSONAL VISIONS OF 10 GIFTED MISFITS.

by

BILL DeMAIN

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01

The Garbage Man
Nek Chand

As the world's premiere green artist, Nek Chand elicits beauty from industrialized society by using everything from metal scraps to broken toys. His 25-acre shrine of trash, The Rock Garden, has welcomed more than 12 million visitors since it opened in India in 1976.

Yet, the Garden had a humble start. In the mid-1950s, Chand was a road inspector working in the north Indian city of Chandigarh. One day, he cleared a small patch of jungle near the Sukhna Lake and started building a garden out of some garbage he'd collected—broken bangles, bits of tire, and other debris. Working alone on nights and on weekends, his secret garden slowly grew. He built archways and courtyards out of cement bags and lined the walls with old light bulbs and wires. He constructed misty waterfalls that flowed through mosaic courtyards filled with sculptures of prancing horses and mighty warriors.

But after 18 years of construction, Chand faced a problem. He'd been building illegally on government land, and when officials discovered what he'd been up to, they threatened to demolish the garden. Thankfully, a series of newspaper editorials rallied the residents of Chandigarh, and the government changed its mind. Instead of razing the land, Chand was given a salary and a crew of 50 laborers to finish what he'd started.

In 2001, Chand received the lifetime achievement award from the Folk Art Society of America. He has since built recycled-art sculptures in Europe and America, and he's inspired a worldwide movement of green artists who turn junkyards into works of art

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02 // The Necromancer

Madge Gill

Madge Gill not only saw dead people, she drew them. In the process, she pioneered a new art form called mediumism, in which phantom forces move the artist's hand like the dial of a Ouija board.

Like many people in the early 20th century, Gill thought it was possible to communicate with the dead. But her fixation with the afterlife had deeply personal roots. At age 37, she lost a son to the influenza epidemic of 1918. The following year, she gave birth to a stillborn daughter and almost died herself. While recovering from labor, Gill developed an obsession with drawing. She claimed that her hand was being aided by a spirit guide called Myrninerest. She even signed her work with the phantom's name.

Gill preferred to draw in the wee hours, by candlelight, or sometimes in complete darkness. She scrawled labyrinthine patterns, mostly in red and purple, on postcards or on long rolls of calico. Nestled in her designs was the same female figure, repeated over and over again: a woman with an oval face and large, dark eyes, who looked startled to be revealed by the artist's pen.

Was it Gill's mother? Her stillborn child? Or the face of Myrninerest?

Gill never said. In fact, while she was living, few people ever knew about her art. She refused to sell her work, for fear of angering Myrninerest. After Gill's death in 1961, her only surviving son, Laurie, sold many of her drawings and donated others to museum collections around the world.

03 // The Latecomer

Grandma Moses

Grandma Moses began her 25-year career as an artist at the tender age of 76. Born in 1860, Anna Mary Moses lived a full life as a farmer's wife and embroiderer before she ever picked up a paintbrush. Creating nostalgic scenes of her childhood in upstate New York, Moses painted pictures of women picking berries, churning butter, and hanging laundry out to dry. Her images were short on artistic polish, but long on sentimentality and feeling. That's what caught the eye of a Manhattan art dealer in 1938, when he discovered Moses selling her paintings for less than $5 apiece in a drugstore. Only two years later, Moses had her first solo gallery show in New York.

While the country was mired in World War II, Moses' warm, colorful paintings touched off a yearning for simpler times and earned her comparisons to Norman Rockwell. Today, her pieces are ubiquitous; even Hallmark uses them on some of its bestselling Christmas cards.

Before she died at age 101, Moses finished more than 1,500 paintings, many of which now hang in museums around the world. To the end, she remained bemused by her popularity, as collectors paid thousands of dollars for her work and critics dismissed her as a "primitive artist."

04

The Mental Patient

ADOLF WÖLFLI

Adolf Wölfli was the original poster child for art therapy. Born in 1864, Wölfli was abused and then abandoned by his alcoholic father. By the age of 31, he'd been convicted twice for child molestation. Prone to violence and hallucinations, Wölfli was institutionalized in a Swiss asylum and considered a lost cause. But then he started to draw.

At first, the asylum guards chalked up Wölfli's intricate geometric drawings to his madness. But one sympathetic physician recognized Wölfli's budding talent and began encouraging him with art supplies. With new confidence, Wölfli embarked on his magnum opus. The resulting 45-volume, 25,000-page semi-autobiography reimagined his troubled youth as sci-fi fantasy. Teeming with kings, queens, talking plants, and travels to alien planets, the tale follows Wölfli's alter-ego, St. Adolf II, as he saves the universe from cosmic war.

The tome is laced with idiosyncracies. There are songs written on a six-note staff, which he played through a paper trumpet. Also included are nonsensical poems, collages, and more than 3,000 stunning illustrations. But perhaps most intriguing are Wölfli's dense, kaleidoscopic drawings that seem to anticipate the psychedelic rock posters of the 1960s.

Wölfli's art was discovered in the 1940s, after famed French artist Jean Dubuffet showcased the outsider's drawings at a European exhibit. Today, Wölfli's art resides in European and American museums. His real legacy, however, lives on in the art therapy that's now used as a widespread and effective treatment for the mentally ill.

WÖLFLI'S MAGNUM OPUS WAS A 25,000-PAGE SCI-FI FANTASY THAT FOLLOWS HIS ALTER-EGO, ST. ADOLF II, AS HE SAVES THE UNIVERSE FROM COSMIC WAR.

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05 // The Famous Unknown Artist

Yoko Ono

Yoko Ono is often blamed for breaking up the Beatles. But it could also be said that the Beatles broke up Yoko Ono's art career.

Before she married John Lennon in 1969, Ono had already made innovative contributions to performance art—a style that combines visual art, theatrics, and absurd humor. While her sly, confrontational approach opened doors for contemporary performance artists such as Miranda July, Ono remains, in Lennon's words, "the world's most famous unknown artist."

Born in 1933, the young Ono rebelled against her aristocratic family. While living in New York City during the 1960s, she opted for a bohemian lifestyle and fell in with an anti-establishment group called Fluxus. The collective blurred the lines between art and life and challenged spectators to find beauty and meaning in the ordinary. Ono's work fit right in. In "Lighting Piece," she stood on stage lighting matches and watching them burn out one by one. In "Cut Piece," she invited spectators to scissor off her dress, piece by piece, until she was completely naked. And in her 1966 film *Bottoms*, she showed two hours worth of extreme close-ups of bare behinds.

But none of this paid the rent. When Ono set out to find a benefactor, she wound up falling in love. Ono and Lennon first met at a London art exhibit in November 1966 and soon became inseparable. Together, they went on to produce legendary performance art pieces such as the Bed-In for Peace, a week-long pajama party in protest of the Vietnam War.

Since Lennon's murder in 1980, Ono has largely shunned the spotlight. She continues to write and create art, though she's better known for her commitment to peace activism and anti-handgun legislation.

06 // The Viking of 6th Avenue

Moondog

Street corner musicians have been around for as long as there have been street corners. But Moondog was the first to land a deal with a major record label.

And he did it while wearing a Viking outfit.

Born to a Kansas family in 1916, Moondog's real name was Louis Hardin. He was blinded at age 16 when a piece of dynamite exploded in his hands. Deciding to take up music, he taught himself several percussion instruments and renamed himself Moondog, in honor of the way his favorite pooch howled at the moon. He also fell in love with Norse mythology and started dressing exclusively in a Viking costume.

In the mid-1940s, Moondog moved to Manhattan. He slept in missions and spent most of his time playing for spare change near the corner of 54th Street & 6th Avenue, where he became a fixture. He sang catchy melodies and accompanied himself on instruments that he'd invented, including a small harp called the "oo" and a triangular drum called the "trimbas." He even invented a sliding sense of rhythm inspired by the streets, which he dubbed "snaketime."

Eventually, passersby warmed to the music of the tall, blind Norseman. As Moondog honed his oeuvre, his celebrity following grew. By the late 1940s, Artur Rodzinski, the conductor of the New York Philharmonic, and jazz clarinetist Benny Goodman were championing his work. The record companies listened. Moondog recorded with Prestige Records during the late 1950s, and then in 1969, he landed a major record deal with Columbia Records.

Although Moondog's albums were never big sellers, he found commercial success with a song in a car commercial and a collaboration with Julie Andrews on a childrens' record. More importantly, he taught major labels to look beyond nightclubs for new talent and opened the door for street musicians such as Joni Mitchell, Jewel, and Madeleine Peyroux.

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07

The Rock Star

BILL DAN

Saying that Bill Dan balances rocks on top of other rocks is like saying that LeBron James shoots hoops. As one of the world's few rock-balancing virtuosos, Dan is an artist who defies gravity with his vertical sculptures.

A former warehouse worker, Dan has been gathering riprap along San Francisco's shoreline for the past 15 years, using it to build craggy towers that are both whimsical and mysterious. Think Dr. Seuss meets Stonehenge.

At first, it was just the early morning joggers who stopped to marvel at Dan's masterpieces. But since the early 1990s, word of mouth has attracted a steady stream of press coverage and tourists. Of course, because Dan relies on gravity as his only glue, and because the sculptures live outdoors, the works are ephemeral. To earn a living, he hires himself out for private parties and teaches workshops. What does Dan tell his students when their sculptures fall over? "Nothing is permanent. Just go along with nature."

08 // The King of the Jungle

Henri Rousseau

For decades now, kids around the world have been drifting off to sleep under Henri Rousseau's popular prints of wild and tropical jungle scenes. And Rousseau would've appreciated that; he thought his works were dreamy, too.

Of course, back in the 1890s, critics and scholars had some other choice words for Rousseau's work. Most of them lambasted it as naive and primitive.

Rousseau was a self-taught painter living in Paris in an era when artists were schooled in academies. But what he lacked in formal training, he made up for in imagination. Rousseau never traveled outside of France and he never saw a jungle firsthand. Instead, he drew inspiration from magazines, books, and the Jardin des Plantes, a botanical garden and zoo in Paris. At night, he'd dream of luscious tropical plants and savage beasts; by day, he'd recreate those scenes on canvas.

For years, Rousseau frolicked in his imaginary jungle, with zero support from the art world. But in 1908, Pablo Picasso, who'd previously scorned Rousseau, declared him a visionary. The critical tide officially turned. Sadly, it was too late for Rousseau. He died in 1910, without knowing that his work would inspire a generation of surrealist painters, not to mention countless generations of children.

AT NIGHT, ROUSSEAU WOULD DREAM OF LUSCIOUS TROPICAL PLANTS AND SAVAGE BEASTS. BY DAY, HE'D RECREATE THOSE SCENES ON CANVAS.

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BANKSY CHALLENGES THE HIERARCHY OF INSIDER AND OUTSIDER ART. HE'S SNUCK INTO MUSEUMS TO HANG HIS OWN WORK ON THE WALLS.

09 // The Vigilante
Banksy

Being the world's most infamous graffiti artist has its pros and cons. On the one hand, you can exhibit your art anywhere you choose, from the Tower of London to Disneyland. On the other, you can be arrested for honing your craft.

For more than a decade, the guerilla artist known as Banksy has eluded the law in order to leave his mark on the world. In the process, he's gone from being infamous to just plain famous. His anti-war graffiti—pictures of monkeys with weapons of mass destruction and rioters throwing bouquets of flowers instead of grenades—first helped to raise his notoriety. But he made major waves in 2005, when nine of his graffiti paintings suddenly emerged on the West Bank barrier between Palestine and Israel. By 2007, one of Banksy's pieces was being auctioned off at Sotheby's for more than $650,000

Little is known about Banksy. Like a comic book hero, he never communicates with the public directly, preferring to use email and press releases instead. It's been established that he once worked as a butcher in London, where he acquired his skills with a knife. (Cut-out stencils are one of his signature styles.)

Banksy has always set out to make a statement about the hierarchy of insider and outsider art. Several times, he's snuck into museums like the Tate and the Guggenheim and hung his own work on the walls. The irony is, Banksy is now almost an insider. Greenpeace has used his art for a campaign, the band Blur hired him to do an album cover, and celebrities such as Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie are avid buyers of his prints.

10 // The Boxer
Daniel Johnston

Diagnosed with bipolar disorder, Daniel Johnston has been in and out of mental institutions for the past 20 years. But that hasn't stopped him from releasing 15 rock albums, exhibiting his drawings in galleries, and becoming a cult hero.

Born into a conservative Christian family in 1961, Johnston was a fragile kid who dreamed of becoming the next John Lennon. But his idol worship went a little too far when he took multiple LSD trips. The drug pushed his psyche over the edge, leaving him fixated on two things: an unrequited high school love interest and a boxing match between him and Satan.

Like an emo Kermit the Frog, Johnston exorcised those demons through intense yet childlike songs. For years, Johnston spent his days working at a McDonald's in Austin, Texas, and his nights perfecting his epic one-man rock albums. By handing out tapes of his garage performances to anyone he met, he became somewhat of a local celebrity. Slowly, word of his genius spread through the indie rock community. By the late 1980s, Johnston's fans included Sonic Youth and Nirvana. But in 1992, when Kurt Cobain sported a Daniel Johnston T-shirt at the MTV Video Music Awards ceremony, the media flocked to Johnston.

Since then, the unstable artist has made an uneasy truce with the spotlight. Every few years, he'll release an album and play a handful of shows. But mostly he prefers to stay in Austin, where he lives under his parents' supervision. When not composing, Johnston enjoys drawing pictures of Captain America and Casper the Friendly Ghost duking it out with the devil. His sketches regularly sell for more than $1,000 apiece. In 2009, Johnston's eccentric art snuck into the mainstream again, when one of his tunes became a featured song in the movie *Where the Wild Things Are*.

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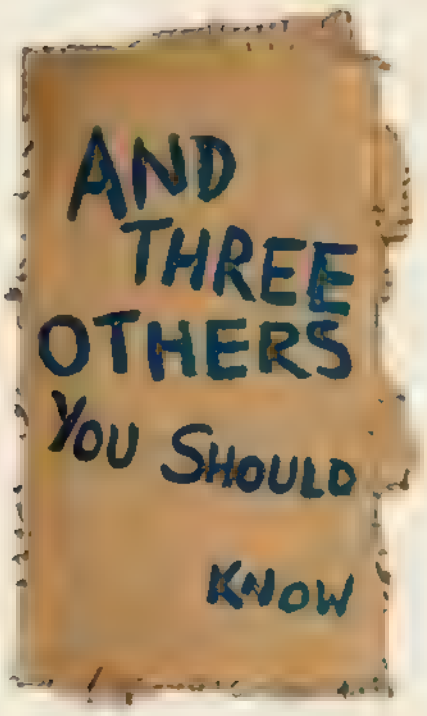

The Prankster

JOEY SKAGGS

Joey Skaggs has been questioning authority since the 1960s. A self-described artist and satirist, Skaggs creates elaborate pranks that are designed to show how easily hype and misinformation can mislead the public. Once, he scammed his way onto CNN by posing as a scientist touting Metamorphosis, a cure-all vitamin pill made from cockroach hormones. Another time, he fooled *The New York Times* into thinking he was the head of The Fat Squad, a ruthless weight-loss program in which musclemen force people to stick to their diets by watching them 24 hours a day. And in 1992, he disrupted the Democratic Convention by peddling Portofess, a portable confessional booth on wheels.

Perhaps his most memorable prank happened in 1976, when he placed an ad in *The Village Voice* for The Cathouse for Dogs, a fake bordello for canine prostitutes. After thousands of pet owners made appointments, the press jumped on the story. Skaggs responded by hiring actors to pretend to pimp their dogs for an ABC News investigation. The televised piece, which was subsequently nominated for an Emmy, prompted the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals to press charges against Skaggs. It was only after a subpoena was handed to him that Skaggs finally revealed the whole thing as a hoax. Although he's officially retired now, Skaggs' warped humor lives on in pranksters such as Sacha Baron Cohen and Jamie Kennedy.

The Savior of Lost Children

HENRY DARGER

Some people have secret lives. Henry Darger had a secret universe.

In 1930, Darger began working as a janitor for a Chicago hospital. He kept mostly to himself, but after hours, in his tiny apartment, his imagination took flight. For more than 40 years, he wrote and painted a 15,000-page illustrated epic called *In the Realms Of the Unreal*. Today, it's hailed as a masterpiece of outsider art.

Darger's childhood was straight out of Dickens. Orphaned at age 8, he was sent to an asylum for feeble-minded boys in 1905. After years of being beaten and forced to do hard labor, he finally succeeded in running away.

In the Realms was Darger's way of redeeming his lost childhood. It's the story of seven pure-hearted girls, The Vivians, who rescue enslaved children from the evil empire of Glandelinia. Full of bloody battles and daring escapes, Darger's illustrations are vivid and captivating. Early on, he'd use comic books and magazines as templates, and then embellish them with paint and collage. Later, as his style matured, he became a mixed-media virtuoso, weaving in photocopies, ink drawings, text, and watercolors. When Darger moved into a nursing home shortly before his death in 1973, his landlord discovered his secret masterpiece. Much of it now resides in The Art Institute of Chicago, just a few blocks from Darger's old apartment.

The Preacher

HOWARD FINSTER

In 1975, a Georgia preacher named Howard Finster had a vision. He saw a tiny face in a globe of paint, and that face said to him, "Make sacred art." So he did.

Finster retired from preaching and started painting biblical and cultural icons on pieces of plywood, gourds, and Coke bottles. He also converted his two-acre property in Pennville, Georgia, into Paradise Gardens, a park filled with mosaic towers, junk sculptures, and a chapel shaped like a wedding cake. After *Esquire* featured Paradise Gardens in a 1975 article, tourists poured in and bought his paintings as inexpensive souvenirs. By the early 1980s, Finster was the closest thing the outsider-art world had to a superstar. He painted an album cover for REM, designed an Absolut Vodka ad, and hijacked Johnny Carson's *The Tonight Show* with a banjo-picking sermon.

A New York agent eventually introduced Finster's work to a richer clientele, but the artist always saw money as a distraction from his mission as the "second Noah." By the time of his death in 2001, Finster had loaded his proverbial ark with 37,000 paintings, each of which he'd personally numbered.

See more masterpieces from these artists at mentalfloss.com/more

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10 THINGS YOU DON'T KNOW ABOUT AFGHANISTAN

BY DAV.D AXE

Most Americans associate Afghanistan with war, and with good reason. During the past century, this mountainous, landlocked nation has endured invasions by the British, the Russians, and the Americans, in addition to years of civil unrest. But underneath the violence is a vibrant, even playful, society that struggles to cope. Reporting from the front lines, correspondent David Axe brings you 10 things you don't know about Afghanistan.

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01 Everybody loves foosball.

In August 2007, the U.S. military dispatched a team of anthropologists to Afghanistan to determine the best way to win the hearts and minds of the Afghan people. Their recommendation? Build better sports centers.

Afghans love games. On Friday nights, men and boys gather to watch fighting partridges. That's right, partridges. The plump, gray-and-white birds peck and flap at each other while the men gamble on which bird will run away first. Although these bird fights are usually bloodless, many other Afghan sports are not. The traditional game of *buzkashi* resembles polo, except that, instead of a ball, you use a headless goat or calf. Also, there's no penalty for brutalizing your opponent (fatalities are not unusual). On a gentler note, volleyball and soccer are also favorites, and for indoor fun, nothing tops foosball.

COUNTERCLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Children play with a damaged foosball table. Afghan horse riders fight for the calf during a *buzkashi* game; partridges battle it out in Tajikistan. In Kabul, kids enjoy Afghanistan's first skateboarding park.

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02

Bank is a four-letter word.

Loans are a touchy issue for Afghanistan's Muslim majority. Because Islam forbids its followers from charging interest, many Muslim nations, even highly developed ones, have poor banking systems.

But the people of Qal'eh-ye Boland, a village in northeast Afghanistan, have found a way around this problem. With the backing of village elders, one local school principal was able to convince his neighbors to donate money into a pool—asking them to give a dollar here, a dollar there. Eventually, a kind of community fund was established. Then villagers started borrowing money and paying it back whenever they could. The unspoken proviso was that, when they paid back the sum, they'd throw in a little extra to support the fund. In everything but name, the operation is a bank, charging interest like any other. But by not calling it a bank, the village of Qal'eh ye Boland has avoided the stigma of money lending, while reaping all the benefits.

AS BUS DRIVER GHULLAM ISHAN EXPLAINED, FOR EVERY 80 AFGHANIS HE EARNS, HE MUST PAY 50 IN BRIBES TO THE LOCAL POLICE.

03

You can't dodge the graft.

Every society has some corruption, but in Afghanistan, "graft" is one of the biggest industries. Nearly everyone in a position of power is on the take, from lowly security guards to influential cabinet ministers. In fact, some mid-level bureaucrats own entire blocks of downtown Kabul, thanks to their under-the-table incomes. And although average citizens hate the system, there's little they can do to avoid it. As bus driver Ghullam Ishan explained, for every 80 Afghanis he earns, he must pay 50 in bribes to the local police. If he doesn't, the police will detain him and make him pay extra.

While most of the graft is inexcusable, many Afghan officials do have good reason for taking bribes. In 2007, NATO troops set up a government-sponsored militia in the Uruzgan province to reinforce the regular Afghan army. But the Afghan government paid the militiamen just $70 a month—$20 less than the average monthly cost of food and rent. To cover their needs, the militiamen began stopping cars on the road and demanding cash. The practice became so widespread that NATO quickly shut down the entire militia program.

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An Afghan farmer milks poppies

04

The war on drugs is getting trickier.

Life is tough for Afghan farmers, who comprise 80 percent of the country's workforce. Surface water is scarce, and the roads are so bad that crops often spoil before they get to market. But one plant grows like a weed: the poppy plant. It thrives in Afghanistan, and ground poppy paste, the basic raw ingredient for heroin, keeps for months. The United Nations estimates that Afghan poppies account for half the world's heroin trade

The Taliban capitalizes on the Afghan drug market by acting as a distributor in exchange for part of the profit. To cut off those funds, the Afghan government, along with the United States and NATO, has tried to eradicate poppies by burning and spraying the crops. So far, the effort only seems to have alienated struggling farmers, who are left trying to make a living from fickle soil. Today, the U.S. Army is trying to wean farmers onto legal crops, including wheat, almonds, and melons. But heroin isn't the country's only drug problem. As international attention focuses on poppy control, many Afghan farmers are switching to marijuana. Not only is marijuana a lucrative cash crop, but many Afghans also horde personal stashes to help them get through the long, cold winters. (In much of the country, the average temperature in January is just above 32° Fahrenheit.) Plus, it's relatively low-risk. For the most part, Afghan cops overlook marijuana patches in home gardens. After all, they've probably got their own stash at home.

05

THEY USE RABBITS AS SPACE HEATERS

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06

There's a code for dealing with strangers.

The largest ethnic group in Afghanistan are the Pashtuns, who account for nearly 40 percent of the national population. Pashtuns are mostly Sunni Muslims who live by the Pashtunwali—a code of conduct that has helped people survive for centuries in this rugged, crossroads land. Although the code covers most aspects of Pashtun life, it is specific to the issue of dealing with strangers. In fact, semantics are incredibly important. After all, in the Afghan countryside, sometimes a stranger just wants food and shelter, and other times he's coming to sack your village. According to the Pashtunwali, if you think a stranger ought to be killed, label him a foreigner and cite the code's anti-incursion clause. If you think it might be better to work with him, call him a guest, instead.

This duality can make for some bizarre situations, as Navy SEAL Marcus Luttrell discovered in 2005. Taliban fighters ambushed his five-man squad, and Luttrell was the only survivor. Wounded, he stumbled into a nearby village, where the residents helped Luttrell link back up with his unit. Those same, kind villagers were likely harboring the very Taliban fighters who attacked him.

07

You don't want to get sick there.

For Afghans, medical care is scarce. After decades of war and tumult, the country's hospitals and clinics are in disrepair. Today, Afghanistan's best trauma center is located on the U.S. Air Force base in Bagram, just north of Kabul. There, the Air Force treats any severely injured Afghans who manage to make the trek. One Afghan policeman in Logar province journeyed 50 miles to Bagram to have two bullets removed from his back after being ambushed by the Taliban. Another man, named Aziz, makes regular sojourns from his home in Kapisa province, more than 5 miles away, so that his daughter can get skin grafts.

The dearth of health-care facilities is due in part to the mass exodus of English-speaking doctors following the U.S. invasion in 2001. Although many eventually returned to Afghanistan, they came back as interpreters for U.S. forces—a job that pays better than any Afghan medical practice.

Sadly, the country's mental health services are even worse. The traditional Afghan treatment for common mental illnesses—severe depression, for example—is to chain sufferers to a tree and feed them bread and water, until they get better on their own.

A doctor with the Afghan National Army examines a baby girl at a makeshift village clinic. The effort is part of Med Cap, the U.S. Army Medical Assistance Program.

10 Things You Don't Know about Somali Pirates
10 Gorgeous Pilgrimage Sites You Need to See

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One of the many Afghan bird dealers at Ka Farushi, Kabul's bird market. There, shopkeepers sell birds of all types—canaries, budgerigars, songbirds, and pigeons, as well as specially trained fighting birds like quails and partridges. Although it was banned under the Taliban, the market is bustling with business once again.

02

It's a bird lover's paradise!

For pets, Afghans prefer birds. Even in remote villages, you can find caged songbirds for sale at roadside stands. Perhaps the appreciation stems from the country's biological diversity. Afghanistan has at least 500 species of birds—eagles, cranes, warblers, larks, and parakeets, just to name a few. And the Smithsonian Institution suspects there are many more species that have yet to be catalogued. To identify them, researchers have teamed up with Afghan falconers—farmers who use eagles and hawks to keep smaller birds away from their crops. The plan is for the falconers to collect the carcasses of dead birds and send them to Smithsonian researchers, who hope to identify and track all the species from the feathers and bones.

03

There is some mosque-on-mosque crime.

Many Afghan villages, even tiny ones, have two mosques—one public and one private—that compete for influence. Successful mosques often franchise, building nearby satellite mosques, even if it means putting one right across the street. Although the U.S. military is aware of the importance of the mosques to village life, they're still determining how to use this information to their advantage. In September 2009, for example, the U.S. Army donated paint, prayer rugs, and a new public-address system to mosques throughout Baraki Rajan, just south of Kabul, in an effort to win over the village. A few weeks later, soldiers visited Baraki Rajan to see the results. To their surprise, the elders of the public mosque said they hadn't seen any of the donated materials, and they accused the elders of the private mosque of hoarding them. Despite their effort, the Americans didn't come across looking like heroes.

AFGHANISTAN HAS AT LEAST 500 SPECIES OF BIRDS ... AND THE SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION SUSPECTS THERE ARE MANY MORE SPECIES THAT HAVE YET TO BE CATALOGUED.

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10

Mind the flags.

The Afghan countryside is littered with millions of land mines, and many Afghans bear the scars of explosions. While aid groups are working diligently to prod the soil and clear the most dangerous minefields, their work is complicated by Afghanistan's torrential rains. The downpours soften the earth, often causing mines to slip downhill. As aid workers locate these landmines, they mark them with tiny red flags. Today, these flags dot the countryside like wildflowers and serve as a reminder of the nearly three decades of nonstop fighting that have scarred these lands.

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They can save your life, crush your soul, make you a fortune, or even leave you penniless. Here are 10 reasons why video games have more real-world power than you think.

01 They Can Marry You

Men have loved video games for a long time, but only one man has proven his love with a commitment ceremony. In November 2009, a Japanese man who goes by the name SAL9000 married Nene Anegasaki, one of three female characters in Love Plus, a video game for the handheld Nintendo DS. He even had a priest there to conduct the ceremony in front of a live audience. SAL9000 had been courting his beloved Nene for a long time; he'd already taken her on vacation to Guam and documented the trip online.

Although the wedding wasn't legally binding, it did highlight the popularity of Love Plus and other dating sims, in which the player—usually a man—woos a number of young women by taking them on virtual dates. In most sims, the game ends when the woman professes her love for the player. Love Plus, however, has taken the concept a step further by advancing the relationship past courtship to physical intimacy. When the virtual girlfriend wants affection, the player can simulate kissing or caressing by touching a stylus pen to the screen. When she wants to hear "I love you," the player speaks the words into the game system's microphone. And while SAL9000 used his wedding ceremony as both a performance-art piece and a lighthearted way to affirm his love for his virtual girlfriend, not all gamers are so self-aware. One Love Plus player reportedly keeps his virtual girlfriend near him while he's sleeping and bathing.

02 They Can Make You a Better Surgeon

The next time you go under the knife, make sure to vet your surgeon's video game skills first. In 2007, researchers at Beth Israel Medical Center in New York City reported that people who played video games for at least three hours a week made better surgeons. In a series of hands-on tests that mimicked laparoscopic surgery, gamers made 37 percent fewer errors and were 27 percent faster than non-players. Among the 33 surgeons who participated, skill and experience at video games were better predictors of test performance than years of training or even the number of surgeries they'd previously performed.

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The study's results confirmed what Dr. James Rosser, Beth Israel's chief of minimally invasive surgery, had long suspected. A lifelong gamer, Rosser noticed that his non-gaming peers didn't have the same fine motor control with their hands that he did. Now that there's proof to back his theory, Rosser and his colleagues have a good excuse for keeping multiple video game systems close to the operating room and playing them in their downtime. After all, a surgeon's got to stay sharp!

03
They Can Make You Crazy Rich

Make no mistake; there's plenty of money to be made playing video games. In the late 1990s, game makers introduced online role-playing games in which thousands, even millions, of online players can vanquish monsters and hunt for treasure while inhabiting virtual worlds. These massively multiplayer online games, or MMOs, encourage players to collect gold coins and other in-game money, and then trade them with other players for more powerful weapons, armor, and equipment.

It sounds innocent, but this virtual market made a quick leap to the real world after users realized that they could sell their make-believe valuables on eBay for a profit. The system, known as gold farming, can be quite lucrative. In 2008, one analyst estimated that gold farming was a billion-dollar industry that employed some 400,000 people worldwide. In China, where 80 to 85 percent of gold farmers reside, companies pay gamers low wages to work 10-hour shifts in sweatshop-like conditions. The firms even have call centers set up to handle international clients, with individual operators fielding as many as 100 calls a day. The system has vexed video game companies, and they aren't the only ones irritated by the emerging market. In Asia, gold farming has become so prevalent that governments are stepping in to regulate the practice. Both the Chinese and Japanese governments have enforced laws concerning virtual currencies due to the growing number of scams and fraudulent acts taking place in gold-farming communities.

05
They Can Teach You about Starting Over

In the early 1980s, Atari was the hottest commodity in the booming video game industry. In 1982, the company grossed $2 billion, thanks in large part to the release of Space Invaders for the home Atari 2600 system. But the following year, everything changed. The company posted losses of more than $500 million, kicking off a two-year slump that nearly killed the young industry.

Although there were many causes for the decline, one of the biggest had to do with a certain lovable alien. It all started when Atari's parent company, Warner, paid more than $20 million to license *E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial* from Universal Pictures. By the time the contract was signed, Atari had only six weeks to come up with a final product. The end result was a poorly conceived game in which E.T. had to find the pieces of a telephone in order to phone home. As if the storyline weren't dull enough, the game's scavenger hunts were made worse by the fact that many of the pits that E.T. could search through were completely empty. Gamers were left frustrated, and sales were abysmal.

But E.T. wasn't the only dud on the shelves. Third-party publishers started flooding the video game aisles with subpar games, and retailers were forced to slash prices. Even Quaker Oats and Purina got into the gaming business, releasing their own shoddy products. Consumers grew so wary of video games that in 1985, when Nintendo arrived on the scene with the NES, its primary marketing angle was to convince parents that it was offering a toy, not a home video game system.

THE END RESULT WAS A POORLY CONCEIVED GAME IN WHICH E.T. HAD TO FIND THE PIECES OF A TELEPHONE IN ORDER TO PHONE HOME.

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06

They Can Teach You How to Build an Empire

In 1984, a 24-year-old game designer named Will Wright published his first game, Raid on Bungeling Bay. The goal was for players to pilot a helicopter over a series of islands, blowing up factories and bridges while dodging enemy fire. As people advanced to the next level, the factories were programmed to produce more sophisticated weapons—fighter jets, missiles, battleships. Realizing that the design tool he used to program the factories was a game in itself, Wright started experimenting with the concept. The result was a new game called Micropolis. This time, the object was to design a city from the ground up. Players built roads, factories, housing, and other infrastructure, and the game progressed according to the principles of urban planning. If the city grew too quickly, traffic congestion set in. If people didn't have enough places to work, they'd not.

Major game companies were leery of a game that had no criteria for winning, but Wright met a pair of fellow designers who liked the concept. The three retitled the game SimCity and self-published it in 1989. The results were stunning. SimCity became a smash hit in its first year, spawning several sequels. It also launched the category of "sandbox" games, which focus on exploring a game's possibilities rather than winning or losing. Riding on SimCity's success, Wright became the first superstar of game design. In 2000, he released The Sims, which puts players in control of simulated people. It went on to sell more than 15 million copies, making it the best-selling computer game of all time.

07

They Can Wreck Your Lives

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08

They Can Shock and Awe

When Nintendo burst onto the home-gaming scene in 1985 with its Nintendo Entertainment System (NES), it was determined not to repeat the numerous mistakes of its predecessor, Atari. One of A gest missteps had been the public relations hit it took in 1982 with the release of Custer's Revenge. The game, created by a third-party publisher, featured a naked General Custer dodging arrows on his mission to have sex with a tied-up Indian princess. Women's rights and Native American's rights groups promptly protested the game, creating a public relations disaster.

Learning from the Custer's Revenge incident, Nintendo made it official policy to review the content of all the games published for its system in the United States to ensure that they were appropriate for America's youngsters. References to sex and drugs were out, as was excessive violence. Nintendo even sanitized the violent games that had already been out in arcades.

Mortal Kombat put an end to this policy. The original arcade version, which was a big hit in 1993, featured characters that punched and kicked each other until they sent blood flying. The brutal game also featured moves called "fatalities," in which players could decapitate their opponents or rip out their hearts. But when Nintendo replaced the blood with sweat and took out the fatalities, the game flopped. Meanwhile, its rival, Sega, released a faithful recreation. Its version of Mortal Kombat outsold Nintendo's three-to-one. Nintendo eased its policy for the game's sequel, but by then, it was too late. In 1995, Sony introduced the powerful new PlayStation console, and game developers flocked to a company that would let them express their pent-up creative urges.

09

They Can Clean Your Room

Nintendo designers knew they were breaking the mold when they introduced the world to the Wii in 2005. Instead of sitting still and pressing buttons, players could get up and move, slashing swords and hitting tennis balls by simply swinging the Wii-mote. The secret to the Wii controller is that it contains both an accelerometer, which measures its velocity, and Bluetooth technology, which sends information to the game console wirelessly.

Of course, it didn't take long for techies to figure out how to hack the Wii-mote, sending the wireless signals to other types of electrical devices. These days, clever programmers use their Wii controllers to deejay music, run interactive whiteboards, and even control their Roomba vacuum cleaners—all by waving their Wii-motes like a wand.

10

They Can Steam Things Up

The best-selling video game series Grand Theft Auto is all about freedom—the freedom to steal cars, run people over, and shoot at the cops. But it was the freedom to have sex that got the makers of the game into legal hot water.

In 2004, Rockstar Games released Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas, the fifth game in the series. In one of the game's subplots, players can send the main character, C.J., on dates with various girlfriends. After enough dates, one girlfriend would invite C.J. into her home for coffee, followed by muffled sounds of fornication. Shortly after the game hit stores, a 36-year-old Dutch techie named Patrick Wildenborg discovered a piece of buried computer code that, when slightly modified, unlocked a scene showing C.J. and his girlfriend in the act. According to on-screen instructions, players could control C.J., pressing up and down to achieve maximum "excitement level."

Wildenborg titled the code "hot coffee" and distributed it online. At first, Rockstar Games denied that the virtual sex was its doing, and insisted that Wildenborg had invented the scene. But hackers quickly uncovered the same code in Rockstar versions made for other gaming systems. The Entertainment Standards Review Board immediately switched the game's rating to Adults Only (18 and up), and stores pulled it from their shelves. In 2009, after lawyers filed a class-action lawsuit alleging consumer fraud, the company settled for $20.1 million.

6 Celebrities and their Bizarre Video Games
Shigeru Miyamoto: The Walt Disney of Nintendo
at mentalfloss.com/more

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10 Not-So-Bright Ideas in Science

Bras that double as gas masks? Diamonds made from tequila? Each year, thousands of scientists, inventors, and oddballs are **nominated for the Ig Nobel prizes, presented by the *Annals of Improbable Research*. And while the judges won't comment publicly on the winners, they will say that each Ig Nobel laureate's accomplishment is "impressive"—however you choose to interpret it.**

BY ALINE MENDELSOHN

01 Medicine Prize
It's Time to Get Cracking

When Donald Unger was a child, his mother warned him that if he cracked his knuckles, he would get arthritis. Skeptical, Unger undertook a 60-year experiment to prove her wrong. He began cracking his left knuckles at least twice a day, while almost never cracking his right. The resulting study, published in the medical journal *Arthritis and Rheumatism*, revealed that after six decades, not only were both of Unger's hands free of arthritis, but they were physically the same. Unger, who grew up to be an allergist, wrote that his result "calls into question whether other parental beliefs, e.g., the importance of eating spinach, are also flawed. Further investigation is likely warranted."

02 Chemistry Prize
Nothing Says Forever Like Tequila

Diamonds are a girl's best friend. But apparently, so is tequila. According to three scientists from Mexico, the two substances are made out of nearly the same material. In fact, the researchers discovered that tequila's natural ratio of hydrogen, oxygen, and carbon can be easily converted into a diamond. All they had to do was heat 80-proof tequila until it became a gas, and then reheat the vapor to break down its molecular structure. The resulting tequila crystals then condensed to form a diamond film. The best part is that the researchers didn't have to spring for premium liquor; even the cheapest tequila did the trick. But don't expect to find tequila-based engagement rings at Tiffany's just yet. The diamond film is far from the size and shape of traditional gems.

03 Veterinary Medicine Prize
There's No Such Thing as an Insensitive Cow

Cows are rarely kept as pets, but giving them pet names could be good for business. Agriculture professors from Newcastle University in England found that dairy cows called by name produce an average of 68 gallons more milk per year. This tidbit may surprise city folk, but the 516 dairy farmers interviewed for the study were hardly shocked. Ninety-three percent of them agreed that it's important to get to know each cow as an individual, and most believed that cows have feelings.

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04 Mathematics Prize

Raking in the Big Bucks

Zimbabwe has been experiencing hyperinflation for years. In response, the governor of Zimbabwe's Reserve Bank, Gideon Gono, did the stupidest thing possible: He printed lots more money. Beginning in 2006, Gono printed currency ranging from 1 cent to 100 trillion dollars (that's $100,000,000,000,000), flooding the local economy. His accomplishment didn't go unnoticed. Gono was awarded the Ig Nobel "for giving people a simple, everyday way to cope with a wide range of numbers." The bank notes didn't help Zimbabweans cope with much else. At the time this article went to press, a $100-trillion note could be bought on eBay for $2.99 USD.

05 Peace Prize

How to Choose Your Weapon in a Drunken Brawl

Thanks to bar fights, forensic pathologists have long been faced with a nagging question: Which is more likely to crack your skull, an empty beer bottle or a full one? Scientists from the University of Bern in Switzerland finally put the question to rest. They glued empty and full bottles to a board with modeling clay that resembled the soft tissue of the human skull. Then, the scientists dropped a 2.2-lb. steel ball onto the bottles from different heights. It turns out that both empty bottles and full bottles can fracture a skull easily, although full bottles have more striking force. Our advice? Drink your beer first. Why let a cold one go to waste?

06 Public Health Prize

Overprotective Underwear

Ever wanted to buy a classy brassiere and a gas mask, but didn't have room for both? Well, now you can have it all in one easy purchase, thanks to Chicago inventors Elena Bodnar, Raphael Lee, and Sandra Manjan. The trio has created a bra that doubles as two separate gas masks, which can protect you and a friend from radioactive particles, toxic chemicals, soot, smoke, and even viruses. Each cup of the bra has a filter, a valve, and a detachable mask. It may sound silly, but the impetus behind the bra-mask is serious. One of the inventors, Elena Bodnar, grew up in the Ukraine in the aftermath of Chernobyl and saw the need for a people's mask made from ordinary materials. Too bad the Wonderbra name is already taken.

Researchers discovered that tequila's natural ratio of hydrogen, oxygen, and carbon can be converted easily into a diamond. Even cheap tequila does the trick.

07 Literature Prize

When Words Turn Criminal

In Ireland, a Polish national named Prawo Jazdy was issued more than 50 traffic tickets in 2007, but his license was never revoked. What's more, each time Mr. Jazdy was ticketed, he gave officers a different address and seemed to be driving a different car. An Irish policeman investigated the matter and discovered that Prawo Jazdy was not, in fact, a person. It's the Polish term for "driver's license." The hapless officers issuing citations had written down the phrase at the top of the license instead of the drivers' first and last names. While the mistake irritated Irish authorities, Ig Nobel judges lauded the errors as poetic justice.

08 Economics Prize

A Banking System as Crazy as Björk

The theme for this year's Ig Nobels was risk, and no other category exemplified that theme quite like economics. Four Icelandic banks—Kaupthing Bank, Landsbanki, Glitnir Bank, and Central Bank of Iceland—earned the Ig Nobel for their spectacular ups and downs. In the years leading up to 2008, these four banks took on enormous risk, issuing massive loans that dramatically increased their value on paper. When the global economic crisis hit, they fell apart, collectively owing six times the GDP of Iceland. Eventually, the government took over the institutions when they couldn't refinance their loans. The banks received the economics prize for "demonstrating that tiny banks can be rapidly transformed into huge banks, and vice versa—and for demonstrating that similar things can be done to an entire national economy."

09 Physics Prize

Knocked Up, But Not Knocked Down

Like many studies, this one started out with a simple question: Why don't pregnant women tip over? Three anthropologists—from Harvard, the University of Cincinnati, and the University of Texas, respectively—studied the spinal columns of 19 pregnant women to find out. What they discovered was that women have three wedged lumbar vertebrae that seem to have specifically evolved to accommodate the additional weight of pregnancy. As best they can tell, pregnant women don't tip over because, well, they're designed not to tip over!

10

Biology Prize

SMART ANSWERS TO DUMB QUESTIONS Does Scratching Relieve an Itch? Do Blind People See in Their Dreams?
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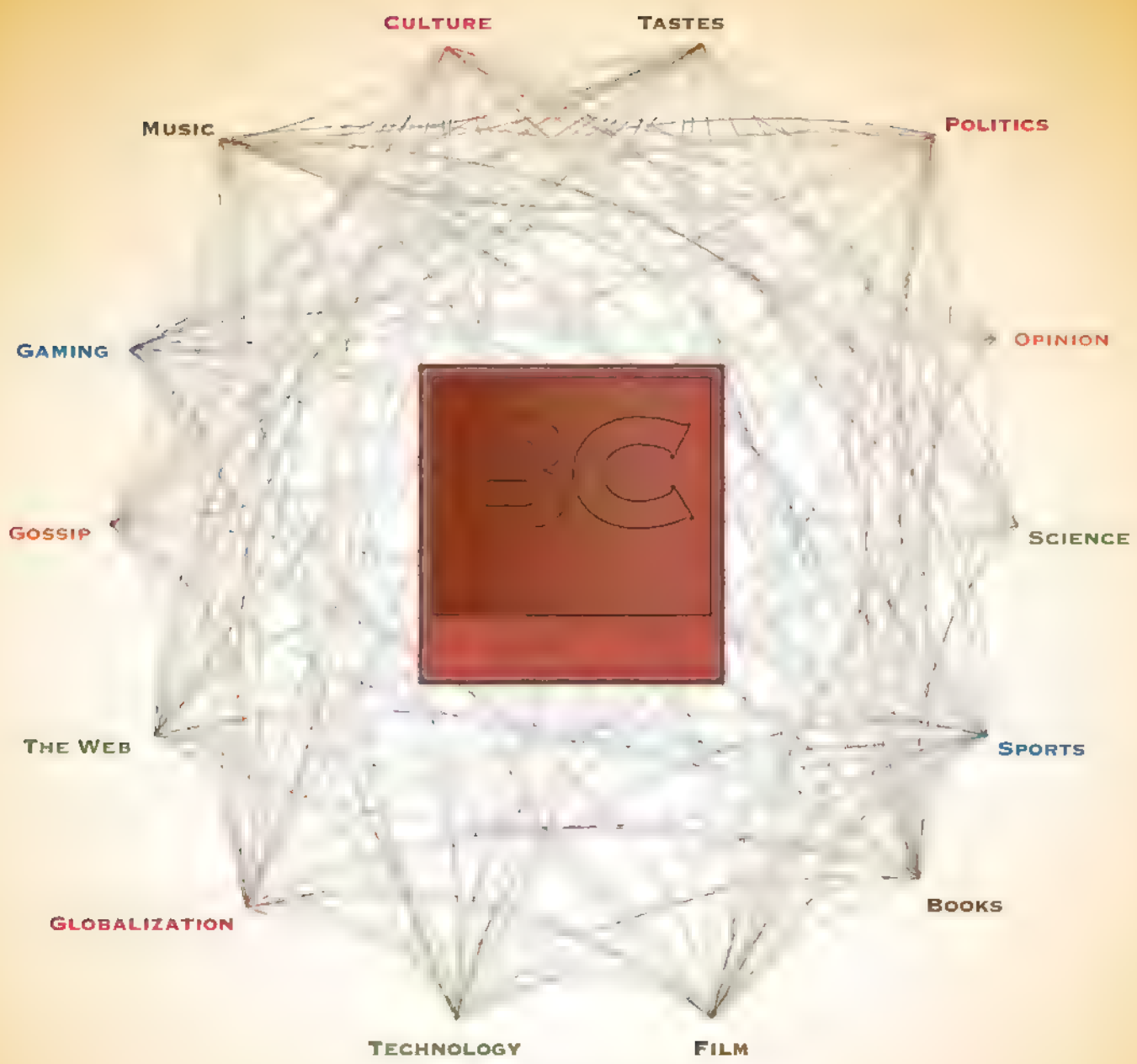

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NASA & NASCAR

We're throwing trivia king Ken Jennings any two people, places, or things and seeing if he can connect the factual dots.

1° In 2005, NASA engineers wanted to study the nucleus of the Tempel 1 comet, so they crashed into it with their *Deep Impact* probe. The mission was declared a scientific success, but the next day, a Russian astrologer slapped the organization with a $300 million lawsuit. Her claim? That the collision upset the universe's "natural balance," which in turn traumatized her horoscope. For its part, NASA denied any damage to the solar system's aura. "The analogy is a mosquito hitting the front of an airliner in flight," a NASA rep commented to the BBC. "The effect is negligible."

2° Welsh inventor Howard Stapleton invented the Mosquito alarm in 2005 to scatter crowds of loitering teens. Because people lose the ability to hear certain pitches as they age, the high-frequency tone was basically inaudible to adults. But teenagers had the last laugh. The technology was repurposed to create a cell phone ringtone called Teen Buzz. Because adults couldn't hear it, the ring quickly became the perfect way to text in class without getting busted.

3° One buzz that teenagers didn't want any part of was the buzz-cut Elvis Presley received in 1958 when he joined the Army. As one Montana girl put it, "If you cut his sideburns off, we will just die!" Elvis, on the other hand, was far less dramatic about the experience. When reporters asked him about lopping off his iconic 'do, Presley simply quipped, "Hair today, gone tomorrow."

4° Your hair knows what you drink … and where you live! In 2007, University of Utah researchers collected discarded hair from 65 barbershops nationwide and analyzed each one for traces of tap water. Because the composition of tap water differs slightly from city to city, scientists could measure the ratios of hydrogen and oxygen isotopes in the hair and determine which strands came from which places. The technology is now being used as a crime-fighting tool to trace suspects and murder victims.

5° New Mexico's minor league baseball team, the Albuquerque Isotopes, owes a major debt to television cartoons. The minor-league team got its name from a 2001 episode of *The Simpsons* in which Homer's beloved Springfield Isotopes plan to move to Albuquerque. Today, the Isotopes sell more merchandise than any other minor league baseball team in the country. As for the city itself, this wasn't its first tangle with cartoon history. In 1945, a confused Bugs Bunny first said, "I knew I should have made that left turn at Albuquerque!"

6° Nobody makes more left turns than a stock car driver. The races are always run counterclockwise, even though the folks at NASCAR aren't sure why. According to competitions director John Darby, it's for safety reasons. In a counterclockwise race, the driver's side of each car is as far away from the track wall as possible. But NASCAR historian Buz McKim tells a different story. Buz explains that it all comes from American horse races, which have been counterclockwise ever since the Revolutionary War. Why? For no other reason than to stick it to the British.

Special thanks to Max Schauder of West Palm Beach, Fla., for sending in this Six Degrees pairing

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QUIZ

BY KARA KOVALCHIK & SANDI WOOD

USE #2 PENCIL

1 Developed in Oregon in 1875, *bing* is a popular variety of which fruit?

[a] pear [b] cherry

[c] apple [d] grape

2) What South American city was chosen as the site of the 2016 Summer Olympics?
[a] São Paulo
[b] Buenos Aires
[c] Caracas
[d] Rio de Janeiro

3) Haumea and Makemake would appear as entries on which of the following lists?
[a] recently extinct fish species
[b] minor Hawaiian islands
[c] dwarf planets
[d] ancient Egyptian pharaohs

4) The Bloomsbury Group, the famed early 20th-century collective of intellectuals, met regularly in which city?
[a] New York City
[b] London
[c] Paris
[d] Chicago

5) The Y7 television rating is intended to designate shows appropriate for which of the following?
[a] no children
[b] children under 7
[c] children 7 and older
[d] all children

6) A *farrier* specializes in which aspect of horse care?
[a] teeth/mouth
[b] hair/hide
[c] hooves/shoes
[d] knees/legs

7) What sport was depicted on the first cover of *Sports Illustrated* back in 1954?
[a] volleyball
[b] basketball
[c] football
[d] baseball

8 Who was the first American to travel to space *twice*?

[a] Virgil "Gus" Grissom
[b] John Glenn
[c] Charles Conrad
[d] Alan Shepard, Jr.

9) Which of these U.S. museums is located in Chicago?
[a] High Museum of Art
[b] Field Museum
[c] J. Paul Getty Museum
[d] Exploratorium

10) According to several sources, which of these pizza toppings is by far America's most popular?
[a] pepperoni
[b] mushrooms
[c] sausage
[d] hamburger

11) In 1940, Soviet military mastermind Leon Trotsky was assassinated in what city?
[a] Cairo
[b] Sydney
[c] Mexico City
[d] Cape Town

12) Back in 2000, Eddie McGee won the first edition of which popular reality TV show?
[a] *The Bachelor*
[b] *Survivor*
[c] *Big Brother*
[d] *The Apprentice*

13) In the U.K. and Australia, *biro* is a brand-name-turned-generic-name for which of the following devices?
[a] photocopy machine
[b] ballpoint pen
[c] disposable razor
[d] space heater

14) In 1965, President Lyndon Johnson signed a bill making it illegal to incinerate which of the following items?
[a] draft cards
[b] the U.S. flag
[c] American currency
[d] vinyl records

15) Which of these computer-related corporations is *not* part of the Dow Jones Industrial Average?
[a] Hewlett-Packard
[b] Microsoft
[c] IBM
[d] Apple

• ERASE COMPLETELY ⟵ READ THIS DIRECTION ⟶

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16 Originally produced as a 1964-1/2 model, what was considered the first "pony car"?

[a] Chevrolet Camaro [b] AMC Javelin [c] Ford Mustang [d] Plymouth Barracuda

17) What number is prominently displayed on many FUBU brand jerseys?
[a] 00
[b] 05
[c] 13
[d] 88

18) In 1922 and 1923, Mary Campbell became the first and only woman to successfully win what competition twice?
[a] Miss America
[b] National Spelling Bee
[c] Nobel Prize for Chemistry
[d] Kentucky Derby

20) Internet domains that end in .CH originate in which nation?
[a] Switzerland
[b] China
[c] Chile
[d] Bulgaria

21) When used to describe sparkling wine, *brut* refers to which of the following?
[a] its color
[b] its effervescence
[c] its alcohol content
[d] its sweetness

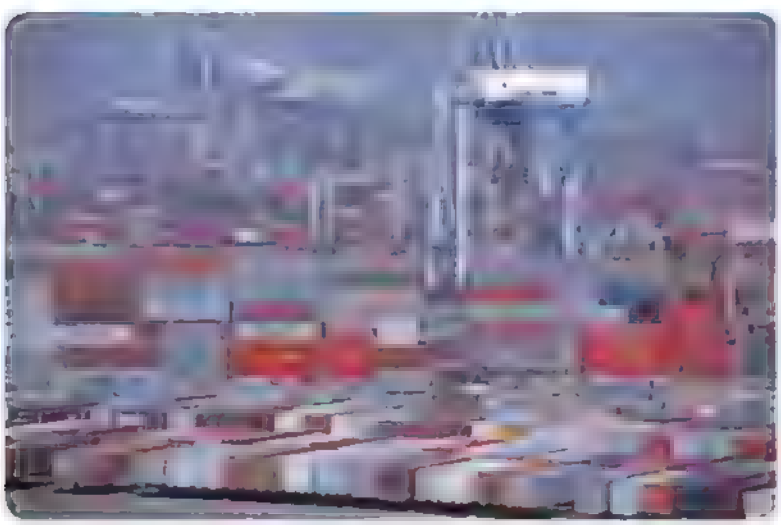
22) Fort Sumter is the site of the beginning of which U.S. war?
[a] the American Revolution
[b] the War of 1812
[c] the Civil War
[d] the Mexican War

23) Which animal lives in a den properly known as a *sett*?
[a] skunk
[b] fox
[c] beaver
[d] badger

24 How old was actor Daniel Radcliffe when the first *Harry Potter* film was released in 2001?

[a] 8
[b] 10
[c] 12
[d] 14

25) The final episode of *M*A*S*H* garnered more viewers than any sitcom episode in history. What NBC sitcom's finale is second on that list?
[a] *Cheers*
[b] *The Cosby Show*
[c] *Friends*
[d] *Frasier*



19) Two-thirds of the United States' 15 busiest ports lie on what body of water?
[a] Lake Superior [b] the Gulf of Mexico
[c] the Pacific Ocean [d] the Atlantic Ocean

ANSWERS

1) b 2) d 3) c 4) b 5) c 6) c 7) d 8) a *[Tragically, he died during a 1967 test of the Apollo craft prior to a third journey.]* 9) b 10) a 11) c 12) c 13) b *[Named after inventor László Bíró.]* 14) a 15) d 16) c 17) b *[The number is a reference to the company's five founders. The name FUBU stands for "For Us By Us."]* 18) a 19) b 20) a *[The nation's official name is Confoederatio Helvetica.]* 21) d *[Brut Champagnes lack sweetness and are generally the driest varieties available.]* 22) c 23) d 24) c 25) a

SCORING

0-10 PRETTY GOOD
11-15 THE BEST
16-20 THE WORST
21-25 ALSO PRETTY GOOD

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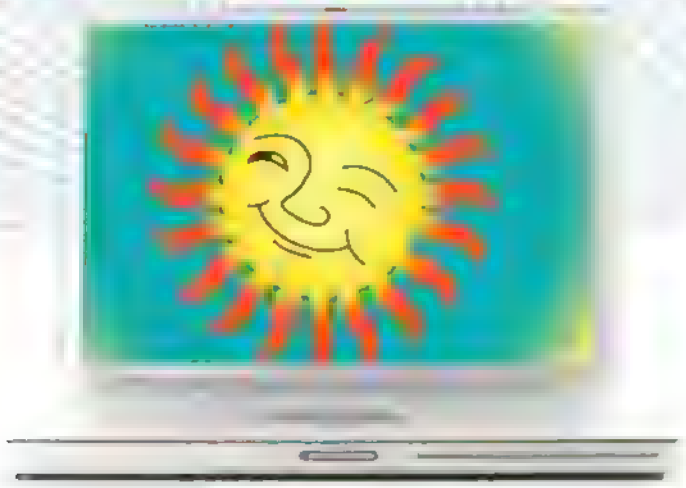

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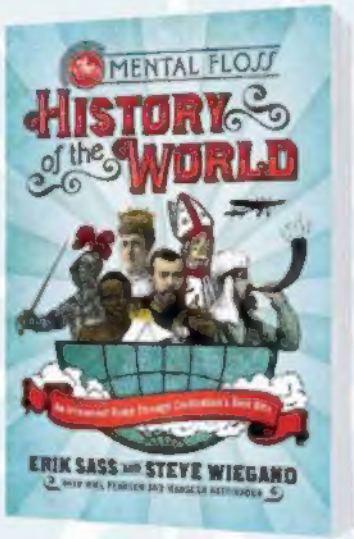

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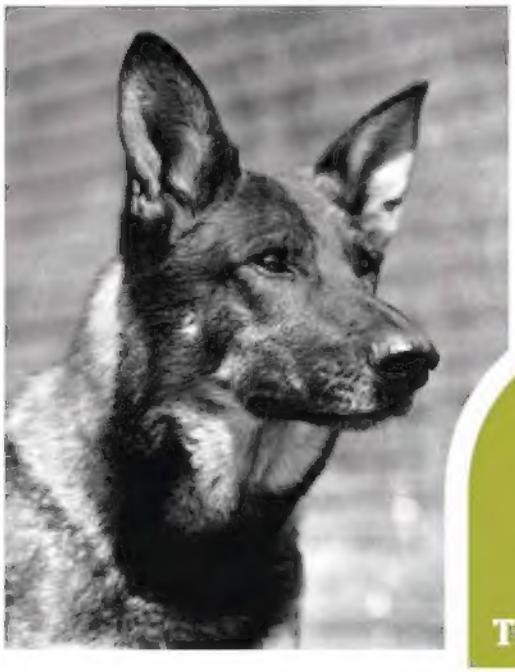

THE LISTS

10 Facts About Rin Tin Tin

1. The first Rin Tin Tin was just a poor, abandoned mutt. An American soldier found him in a destroyed French dog kennel at the end of WWI, and took him home to L.A. When a Hollywood producer saw the pooch leap 12 feet into the air, he offered to make the dog a star.
2. Why "Rin Tin Tin"? During the war, French children gave U.S. soldiers little puppets for good luck. One of the most popular puppet characters was named Rintintin.
3. Soon after his rise to stardom, Rinty became pretty spoiled. At the height of his popularity, a private chef prepared a tenderloin steak lunch for the dog every day.
4. Following his lunch, a group of musicians played classical music to aid his digestion.
5. But maybe Rin deserved the star treatment. He received about 10,000 fan letters a week, and commanded a $6,000/wk salary. (Greta Garbo was making $7,000/wk for her films.)
6. The first Rin Tin Tin died in the arms of actress Jean Harlow in 1932. She lived across the street and allegedly came running when she heard that her favorite neighborhood dog was ill.
7. Rinty has a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. Lassie and Strongheart are the only other canines to share the honor. Somewhere, Toto is mad.
8. Rin Tin Tin's son, Rinty II, also has a claim to fame. He was the first dog to fly on a commercial flight.
9. Rin Tin Tin III was considered an official soldier during WWII. He had his service number tattooed on his leg and helped to train more than 5,000 military dogs and handlers.
10. Want to own a little Rin Tin Tin yourself? A Texas kennel breeds Rinty's progeny exclusively, but it will cost you. One pup goes for as much as $2,500.

10 Weird Profession Names

1. Both Johnny Carson and Harry S Truman started out as **haberdashers**, selling men's clothes.
2. The folks responsible for cleaning and repairing the metal fenders in front of fireplaces are known as **fendersmiths**. But don't expect to see any listings on Monster.com; most of them are employed at estates and castles.
3. Alice's crazy, tea-swilling acquaintance in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* could have been called the **Mad Milliner**; that's the professional term for a hatmaker.
4. **Flatulists** are, you guessed it, comedians who pass gas in a musical or otherwise entertaining manner. King Henry II of England kept a flatulist in his court who could supposedly blow out candles with his own wind while tooting musical numbers at the same time. Classy, no?

5. Despite what it sounds like, **wool-staplers** don't staple sheep to the walls. They're the professionals who buy wool from producers, then sort it, grade it, and sell it to manufacturers.
6. Need a fancy word for a master diamond cutter? Try **diamantaire**.
7. **Manciples** are hard to come by these days, but you might find one at Oxford University. Or at a monastery. While the word is rarely used in the States, manciples are the folks who buy and store food for institutions.
8. Baltimoreans with a hankering for some fresh fruit need only to step outside and find themselves an **arabber**—one of the fruit or veggie vendors who work their colorful carts all across Charm City.
9. **Grooms of the Stool** were unfortunate groomsmen paid to thoroughly wipe the King of England's rear and then inspect the stool for signs of illness. While the job seems like a good argument for overthrowing the monarch, it was actually an enviable position in the day.
10. A **Malletier** doesn't make large hammers, but rather luggage and suitcases. In fact, the full name of Louis Vuitton is "Louis Vuitton Malletier."

BY STACY CONRADT

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MEMBER REPORT
No. 1979

WHEN OUR

DOCTOR LEFT

THE HOSPITAL FOR AN APPOINTMENT, HE TOLD ME I WASN'T EVEN CLOSE TO DELIVERING. ONE HOUR LATER, I WENT INTO

HARD LABOR.

WHEN WE FINALLY TRACKED HIM DOWN, HE STROLLED BACK IN WEARING

TENNIS CLOTHES.

I THOUGHT THIS KIND OF THING ONLY HAPPENED ON

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